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**BREAKING THE MACHO MOULD: MEETING BOYS'
NEEDS IN SEX AND RELATIONSHIPS EDUCATION**

**A thesis submitted to Middlesex University
in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy**

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ABSTRACT

The work examines the needs of boys as regards sex education in school. The literature search depicted a situation where boys' needs were being neglected despite the calls from such bodies as the British Medical Association. Literature supports the idea that there is an overemphasis on biology rather than relationships and this, coupled with peer and teacher expectations of masculine behaviour, neither helps boys to cope with relationships nor aids them in their understanding of the needs of others or coping with their own fears and anxieties. The growing problem of early teenage pregnancies and sexually transmitted infections (STIs) had led to comparisons with other countries, which show that England has a severe problem with underage pregnancy and the transmission of STIs.

Research was undertaken to investigate the characteristics of sex and relationships education for boys with the object of determining their needs and what types of education would best meet these needs. Investigations took place in eight diverse secondary schools in the south east of England. Questionnaires were issued to boys and girls in the sixth form regarding their experiences of school sex education. In addition students in their first term at university were also asked to complete questionnaires to give a wider scope to the research. Eight co-ordinators of Personal Social and Health Education were interviewed to discover their opinions of sex education in secondary schools at present and whether this was meeting the needs of pupils, especially boys. Research was then conducted to examine alternative methods of delivering sex and relationships education to determine if these strategies could better satisfy boys' needs in this area. These included a student tutor scheme in Prague a teacher training establishment in The Netherlands, an 'agony uncle' who ran a computer helpline for boys, a theatre group, two male sex education workers who deliver sex education to boys, a peer education scheme and a Teenage Health Project. Three focus group interviews were carried out with young men of sixteen and seventeen to determine their feelings about their sex education and how it could be improved.

In order to assess these diverse schemes a set of criteria was established against which to judge sex education delivery. These criteria were devised from the search of literature, the focus group and questionnaire responses and suggestions from the alternative method respondents and the co-ordinators. The schools' sex education provision and the alternative methodologies were then evaluated against these criteria. Results showed that none of the methods totally met the needs of boys. The analysis was used to determine a new strategy to meet the needs of boys with regard to their sex and relationships education. At the heart

of the strategy is a curriculum with a stronger emphasis on relationships, how to cope with and express emotions. The content, methods of delivery, amount of sessions, size of groups and the types of teachers required are also defined.

Acknowledgements

My thanks go to all the respondents who gave generously of their time to answer questions, attend focus groups and allowed me to observe them in action.

My particular thanks go to the focus group boys whose honesty, openness and wholehearted support helped me to learn a great deal about the feelings of their sex about this area of the curriculum.

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Preface

My interest in sex education began, during my own first experiences of school sex education lessons. In my first year at grammar school in the late nineteen fifties, I was introduced to this area of education through the then standard 'birth of a baby' lessons. Very little detail on how the baby was conceived was given and my major memory of the experience is the vivid visual recollection of our science teacher, Mrs. Abrahams, staring at the biology laboratory wall, whilst stating the facts. I remember musing over the contrast between her white coat and the bright redness of her cheeks and the realisation hit me then, as a girl of twelve, that she was intensely embarrassed by the material and the teaching situation in which she found herself. As a result of this I paid little attention to the information she was trying to impart but squirmed for her in sympathy. When I eventually trained as a teacher and had to face the prospect of teaching this material myself in child development lessons, I realised the problem. No preparation for working in this field had been offered during my training and there was no one in the school who seemed able to offer INSET help. Eventually I followed courses in health education and by dint of wide reading and discussions with health professionals, with whom I came into contact, my interest in this area grew. I began to realise the desperate needs of young people to be furnished with the facts, but also to be given the opportunity of a safe environment in which to discuss their concerns and anxieties. One lesson, ostensibly on gutting a herring which I delivered to second years (Year 8) in a Derbyshire comprehensive, proved a case in point. As a result of me calling the herring 'he' one bright individual, presumably attempting to entertain the rest of the class, asked me why I was addressing the fish with the masculine gender. As a result of my explanation of the differences in the roes of male and female fish, the lesson changed into a question and answer session on subjects ranging from puberty to intercourse, parenthood and abortion. This was, I believe, the best sex education lesson I have ever taught. It was relaxed and natural, my hands still covered in fish scales and blood, completely unplanned but totally child centred and starting from their needs and uncertainties. The question and answer session is, as a methodology, still popular in sex education today, but the spontaneity I was able to employ has gone as a result of government legislation and the need to allow children to be withdrawn from lessons. This is hardly an improvement, through the attitude of my then headteacher in forbidding any member of staff to utter the word sex in front of pupils is no longer the norm I am pleased to say.

My growing interest in this area, together with my concern about the effects of gender on education, forming as it did the main area of study for my Masters Degree, eventually led to an interest in the problems of boys within the formal school setting and of the teachers that were trying to cope with disaffected young men who behaved badly and firmly believed as one year eleven pupil told me that

You don't have any interest in what I think, you just pretend you do
(Year 11 boy 1987)

Chapter 1 Society Sex and Disadvantage

More than half of Britain's pupils aged 14 and 15 are still being taught about parts of the body despite some being sexually active already ...
The mechanics of sex and sexual intercourse are covered thoroughly by fewer than half of schools

AVERT (2000b)

The AVERT report further claims that for more than half the young people surveyed in 300 schools, sex education did not 'include any significant reference to sexual intercourse' (AVERT, 2000b). There were 'alarming gaps in efforts by schools to teach skills in how to negotiate about relationships' or 'how to talk about sexual topics'. Yet, according to the Sexual Attitudes and Lifestyles Survey of 1999-2001 the average age for first intercourse is now sixteen, and for thirty percent of boys and twenty five percent of girls this initiation happens at an earlier age (Johnson at al., 2001).

If this is true of provision in general it would appear that the state of provision for boys is even bleaker. Davidson (1996) and Pyke (1996) point to the fact that formerly it was considered that girls were the 'problems' in sex education. Boys, Davidson believes, have been 'left out of the picture' and whilst girls are encouraged to discuss and think about their sexual relationships as a preparation for adult life, boys are regarded as beyond help. He points to the training of young boys who, though born with a similar capacity for feeling emotion as are girls, are quickly moulded by society into the rigid stereotypes of the 'macho male'. This image of the irresponsible, uncaring male unable to express feelings and emotions and seen by many, as 'a hostage to fortune' has interested the writer for a considerable amount of time. At the turn of the millennium women, according to evidence presented in popular women's magazines, films and pop culture, want the companionship of men but particular kinds of men, not the 'hard' boorish, beer swilling, sexist male of myth and TV programmes. They would prefer one who is sensitive, caring, takes a fair share in childcare and understands a woman's sexual and emotional needs. If we are to change the 'Gazza's' of popular folk law into 'new men', their education on sexual matters, emotions, feelings, beliefs and attitudes must be part of the process. Unfortunately, at present, it appears that this fact is being ignored by the majority of those involved with sex education in this country and the needs of girls and the Government's desire to tackle the problems of single motherhood, have resulted in a forgotten gender as regards sex education. The intention of this research was to discover the nature of boys'

sex education in schools, what methods of delivering sex education best suit boys' needs, and to examine alternative methods of working in this area that might be of benefit to them. The intended outcome for the research was to suggest changes to the existing approach to boys' sex education.

Education and the Economy

Over the last decade there has again been concern with the apparent increase in the polarisation of society. Social divisions have increased, the rich becoming wealthier and the gap between the rich and poor increasing (Abercrombie and Ward, 2000). This has been echoed to some extent by the 'north south' divide in England where the affluent south has left behind the north of the country, where chances of employment are lower and poverty more evident (Regional Trends, 2003). According to Department of Social Security figures eight regions from the Midlands northwards and Wales are over represented in the bottom fifth of income distribution (Abercrombie and Ward, 2000). However, some of the London boroughs such as Hackney, Lambeth, Southwark and Tower Hamlets are amongst the eighty eight most deprived areas of the country, having pockets of extreme poverty with all the attendant problems of poor health, bad housing and high incidence of relationships breakdown, despair and lack of responsible attitudes (London Research Centre, 1996; Social Exclusion Unit 2001; Butler, 2002). Society and the country have suffered from a lack of or reduction in financial contributions from the impoverished to the exchequer, by means of tax and National Insurance payments. In addition to this, there is the need to support the poor by a variety of social and financial means. Also the talents, skills and abilities of these people have been lost to the nation resulting in unrealised potential. The causes of this divide are many and complex but this is no reason for accepting the status quo.

Education has often been suggested by social and educational theorists as a means of escape from this downward spiral; gaining qualifications, as the way to success. However, this is a somewhat simplistic viewpoint, in that some students find it extremely difficult to gain benefit from the education and qualifications offered. These include children who are living in poverty, with poor housing, those whose parents are struggling to make a living and have no time to support their learning and those who come from dysfunctional or broken families or who are in the care of the state. The Social Exclusion Unit, *Teenage Pregnancy Report* (1999) draws attention to the fact that included in this group are many children who come into the world as a result of an unwanted pregnancy, often to young unsupported mothers with poor educational qualifications and experiences and who suffer

the consequences of poor health and lack of opportunities. However, underachievement in education, as shown by government statistics, clearly demonstrates that that this is a complex problem affected by class, race and gender, the most significant of these being class (Gilborn and Mirza, 2000; Social Trends, 2002). Despite this fact there has been much interest in recent years in boys and their perceived underachievement in education (Arnot et al., 1998; Bleach, 1998; Epstein and Johnson, 1998; Godson, 2001). Boys' results in National Curriculum Tests at GCSE and Advanced Level exams lag behind those of girls, particularly in literacy (Education Guardian, 2001). At Key Stage 1 and 2 in English and Maths girls out perform boys at all levels particularly in written English where at Key Stage 2 there is a ten percent gap (DfES, 2001; EOC, 2002). The figures for 2002 show that girls are performing sixteen per cent higher than boys in writing and six percent in reading (BBCNews/education, 2002).

These phenomena together produce a complex picture where deprivation, gender, class, and poor educational standards are linked. If poor sex and relationships are added to this equation the cycle of underachievement and poor health may continue unchecked.

Sex and Health

In recent years governments have increasingly targeted public health issues with increased resources, in an attempt to raise awareness of healthy lifestyles, combat preventable diseases such as HIV and AIDs and lower early teenage pregnancy rates. Government initiatives to improve the general health of its citizens have included '*The Health of the Nation*' document in 1992 which set out targets for this improvement, such as halving underage pregnancies and reducing the incidence of sexually transmitted diseases and the Green Paper '*Our Healthier Nation*' launched in July 1997 (Neesham, 1998). This paper highlighted schools as one of the priority areas for health initiatives which could break the cycles of inequality, much ill health being linked to deprivation. Indeed schools are proposed as keys in the drive against ill health and, at its launch in 1997, Estelle Morris the then Health Secretary, stressed the importance of the fourth 'R', that of relationships education. The paper built on the White Paper '*Excellence in Schools*' which highlighted the role schools can play in tackling 'our most pressing public health problems including teenage pregnancies' (DfEE, 1997). This approach did little, however, in the eyes of campaigners to further the cause of comprehensive personal and social education (Wallace, 1997), though areas such as these are grouped under the heading of 'skills for life'.

Over recent years there has been growing concern over the fact that Britain has the highest teenage motherhood rate in Western Europe at the rate of 8.5 pregnancies per 1000 13-15 year olds. This is equal to 7000 girls under 16 becoming pregnant each year, approximately two per secondary school (Dept. of Health, 1999). This is around double the rate in Germany, quadruple that in France and seven times that of The Netherlands. The Social Exclusion Unit's (1999) *Teenage Pregnancy Report* made suggestions on how to combat the phenomenon, such as, working with other departments to develop an integrated strategy to tackle the problem. The Social Exclusion Unit (1998) and The Family Planning Association (FPA) (Godson, 2001) expressed concern about the rapid rise in teenage pregnancies for the third consecutive year, particularly amongst 13-15 year olds. In 1996 there were 9.4 conceptions per 1000 girls compared with 8.4 in the previous year, a rise of 11%. In 2000 there were 7,700 conceptions under sixteen and 2,100 under fourteen (Godson, 2001). The FPA has urged the Government to act in order to inform girls of their options more clearly, particularly as early motherhood brings with it social exclusion from good housing, good health, education and jobs and leads to an increase in welfare support costs. Tessa Jowell, the then Minister for Education, insisted that tackling teenage pregnancy and its related poverty and social exclusion would be one of the tests of 'government effectiveness' (Dept. of Health, 1998). Despite determined government efforts and the provision of financial resources in 2002 pregnancies in under-sixteens rose from the previous year, though there was a 2.4% fall in the overall figures to 8.3 per 1000 (Butler, 2002). The government wants to see a firm downward trend in conception rates by 2010. Further to this concern is the worry over the sexual health of teenagers. Between 1995 and 96 in England and Wales terminations increased by 14.55% among the under 16s and by 12.5 % among 16-19 year olds, whilst sexually transmitted diseases were also on the rise, particularly Chlamydia, a leading cause of infertility in later life. Cases had risen by 16.5% in young women and 17.9% in young men (Boseley, 1998) and between 1999 and 2000 by 58% (bbc.co.uk, 2001). One in 45 men and one in 66 women are now, often unknowingly, carrying this infection (Godson, 2001). McKee, in an editorial in the British Medical Journal, points to education as being a major factor in delaying pregnancy, whilst, poverty, lack of time families spend together and the long working hours of British parents compared with their European counterparts are suggested as the possible causes of early conception (Boseley, 1999). In all these published figures and expressed concerns the role of fatherhood is hardly mentioned. From the presented work it appears that there is a process akin to Immaculate Conception at work, where girls become pregnant on their own. This clearly reflects the position of boys within sex education, shadowy figures who

are considered a nuisance, difficult to work with and, as Davidson (1996) describes them, considered by sex educators as 'a hopeless case'. While this is perhaps an oversimplification, Davidson (1996) believes that to achieve success in this area there needs to be a radical change in approach to sex education for boys and young men. Those involved in sex education for boys, need to understand the lives of young men and boys and how important are the social pressures on their behaviour and most importantly their relationships. In order to do this it is possible that a different approach is required when working with males as opposed to females. We also have the problem of two major Government Departments, Health and Education, attempting to address this problem from different perspectives. Added to this is the work of the Cabinet Office, in particular the Social Exclusion Unit (situated in both the Home Office and Education) and the practical difficulties are clear.

Overcoming the Problems

The Social Exclusion Unit Report 1999 (Sherman, 1999) suggested a variety of solutions to the problems associated with teenage conception. These included the improvement of sex education in schools and possibly young fathers through monetary sanctions or the withdrawal of driving licenses. Whether these initiatives succeed in reducing young males' sexual adventures remains to be seen. What it does reveal, however, is that the attitude amongst the media and possibly policy makers is that boys are feckless and irresponsible, whereas there is evidence that the opposite is in fact true (O'Sullivan, 1999). The attitude towards young mothers also appears punitive and drawn in direct descent from earlier beliefs, when young pregnant girls were deemed by the 1913 Mental Deficiency Act to be moral defectives and locked away in mental hospitals. Today the proposal is to put the 'errant' girls into hostels. In neither case have fathers been considered part of an ongoing relationship.

Boys it appears seek out role models during the years of puberty in order to engage in what Kinlon and Thompson (1999) describe as 'psychological warfare' which involves cruelty, bullying, power struggles and a survival of the fittest culture. To survive in such a hostile environment does not call for the ability to express tender emotions; rather the ability to demonstrate the current concept of maleness and to become 'perpetrator, victim or silent witness' as required (Kinlon and Thompson, 1999). Boys themselves are conscious of the prevailing acceptable masculine culture and realise early that it is self-policing; boys themselves punish those who do not conform, by bullying and name calling (Hill, 2001). This does not bode well for boys becoming the responsible partners and parents desired by

society, as the prevailing culture is not one of tenderness, caring or responsibility in relationships.

According to social learning theory, people's behaviour is best understood by examining their perceptions of their social environment. Conner and Norman (1996) believe that the majority of human behaviour is learned through four phases, observational learning from others, remembering through symbolic representation, rehearsing the behaviour and the actual performance of that behaviour. If, therefore, these processes govern the sexual behaviour of boys, then to obtain the required responses to sex education these four processes of learning must be born in mind when working with boys and young men. Social inoculation theory (McGuire, 1964 in Evans et al., 1998) suggests that people will respond to being trained to resist social pressures, provided that the training is sufficiently context specific and provides functional information. The values and norms of the people in the groups to which we belong influence us greatly and it is these values and norms that must be challenged and influenced if sex education is to succeed.

To many of those working in this area, following Government initiatives, it has become obvious that much of the focus of this education and the materials provided to teach it are girl oriented, with the specific design of reducing teenage motherhood and the related financial costs to society. All efforts so far have been spectacularly ineffective. According to the NHS Centre for Reviews and Dissemination (1997), despite the best efforts of a variety of education programmes, achieving desired behaviour change through those programmes is an exception rather than a usual outcome. This is hardly surprising, as one half of the perceived problem appears to be neglected and ignored. Research shows (Blackmore, 1996; Millard, 1997; OFSTED/EOC 1996; Salisbury and Jackson, 1996), the differing needs of boys and girls as regards teaching methods and preferred learning styles. Salisbury and Jackson (1996:27) describe the needs of boys for schoolwork to have a 'concrete end product as opposed to consisting of 'interactive collaborative activities'. However, this does not appear to be applied when educating boys about sexual relationships. True also, is the concentration on biology, contraception and the mechanics, much of which is again dominated by the female body. This is at the expense of relationships education and a discussion of what it is to be a male growing up in an uncertain world, where men's roles are changing and where public perceptions of acceptable male behaviour appear to vacillate between the stereotyped macho image and the concept of 'the new man'.

The problem lies with the boys, though it is not their fault. Sex education lessons in schools are not stimulating enough, concentrating too much on biology and not enough on preventing disease and pregnancy.
Godson (2001 in press)

Both Davidson (1996) and Forrest (1998) believe that boys are desperate to talk about sex and the related areas of pornography and violence, but sex educators, often fearful of a media backlash, ignore these. The question of how to do this effectively remains unanswered, with no agreement on single sex or mixed gender groups being forthcoming. This is coupled with conflicting and confusing advice to teachers over the exact state of the law regarding sex education. All these uncertainties have led to confusion, fear of engaging with controversial issues and stagnation in the sex and relationships education which is taught in many of the schools in England and Wales, with the consequence of another poorly informed generation reaching adulthood. Certainly good sex education is not the panacea of all of the problems of modern society. As Neil Davidson says

Sex education is not a wonder cure for society's ills but it does offer an exciting way into the process of helping young men change their lives for the better.

Davidson (1996:21)

However, it is obvious as Carter and Carter (1997) profess, that boys, who have a bleak view of their future because of lack of job opportunities, confused models of masculinity, peer expectation and family breakdown, may well adopt reckless sexual behaviour when their sense of self-preservation and positive regard are low. Epstein (1999) goes further in professing that schools have 'an impossible task' attempting to teach children in a sexless environment whilst they are surrounded by sexuality but kept ignorant, and prevented in theory from discussing sex except in what she describes as the 'sex education ghetto'.

The lack of success with present policy is clear as the statistics from the Social Exclusion Unit as demonstrated by Butler (2002). The requirement to address the needs of boys now has high priority in the education debate (Bleach, 1998, Mac an Ghail, 1994; DfES, 2001). However, at present this drive has not been applied to educating boys specifically about sex, the argument appears to be concentrating on boys' low achievement in academic terms, as demonstrated by government statistics (DfES, 2001).

There is therefore a need for research into sex education in order to determine if the needs of students are being addressed and where sex education can be used to tackle the

problems experienced by boys in establishing relationships and becoming responsible parents. It is essential to discover; if what is at present being provided in schools for sex education is meeting the needs of boys, what methods of delivery best suit their needs and how and where sex education can be improved. Such information can provide ideas or ways to proceed, to redress the present problems of early pregnancy, absent fathers and dysfunctional families.

Aims of the Research

- To review the effectiveness of sex education, especially for boys and, in the light of the analysis.
- To recommend how sex education for boys can be improved as regards delivery, the teachers and methods employed and the curriculum required.
- This to be achieved without damaging the education given to girls.

To achieve these aims the following objectives had to be met: -

- Conduct a literature search in order to determine the construction of masculinity, the needs of boys, their learning style preferences and the present nature of the sex education they receive.
- Ascertain the state of sex education in a variety of schools today.
- Establish what boys see as their needs in school sex education.
- Produce a set of criteria based on the above, against which school practice and methodologies used in sex education could be evaluated.
- Examine a range of alternative methods which may be used to teach sex education to boys and evaluate them in line with the criteria established.

To do this it was essential to: -

- a) Examine what is happening in schools today and how those who have recently been through the sex education process view and reflect on their experiences.
- b) Examine specific and specialised methods such as theatre groups, student tutoring, peer teaching, specialist delivery to boys alone, and Internet advice lines.
- c) Evaluate these methods against the criteria already established.
- d) Use these findings to produce a new strategy for sex education which specifically addresses the needs of boys.

Chapter 2 Sex Education and Boys: The Context

Taught by women and focussed on girls, the system perpetuates that sex education isn't 'man's stuff'.

(Blake in Godson, 2001:1)

History of Sex Education

Explicit sex education in this country was first delivered in the 1920s (Mort, 1987). However, according to Reiss (1998a) it is unlikely that many children received any sex education in school prior to the World War II and, according to Barry (1979 in Reiss, 1998a), what sex education did occur was probably mostly concerned with the prevention of illegitimacy. Reiss (1998a) believes that this was probably targeted at girls and generally 'patriarchal' in nature, that is women being seen as subservient to men's sexual needs. Post World War II the emphasis moved towards the prevention of sexually transmitted diseases. Reiss (1998a) describes the lessons of the forties, fifties and sixties as

...largely carried out vicariously through the descriptions, though not through observations, of the reproductive habits of plants and non-human animals

(Reiss, 1998: 8a)

It is difficult to see how studying the 'birds and the bees' could increase understanding about conception, birth or the transmission of sexual desires. This would challenge the most intellectually able of pupils

Hemmin at al.. (1971) argue that one of the errors of the past has been to limit sex education or even to exclude it entirely. Went (1995) points out the change in school sex education which occurred in the 1970s, when biology textbooks began to be more explicit in descriptions of human reproductive systems and contraception came into the curriculum in some schools. She stresses that the main emphasis was on correct information, whilst what Reiss (1998a) describes as the reduction of 'ignorance, guilt, embarrassment and anxiety' also featured. However, relationships did not feature strongly in teaching unless covered in personal and social education. The 1980s saw a rise in the feminist perspective regarding sex education, namely issues such as sexual inequality, gender roles and concern over the gendered nature of sex education. This was coupled with the teaching that men need the help of women to control their sexual urges (Mort, 1987).

Reiss (1998a: 9) points also to the growing inclusion of areas such as ‘decision-making, communicating, personal relationships, parenting and coping strategies’ (Surrey County Council, 1987:3 in Reiss, 1998a: 9). The advent of HIV and AIDs and the rise in sexually transmitted infections (STIs) resulted in rising government interest in sex education in the concern to protect public health. Reiss (1998a: 10) argues that it was at this time that education became a ‘political football’ and this, together with the rise of ‘lesbian and gay movements’ led he believes to the ‘polarisation of views on sex education’.

The components of sex education have therefore evolved over time and may include some or all of the following areas and possibly others such as religious or cultural attitudes.

Puberty	Contraception	Birth
Emotions	Morals	Relationships
Legal aspects	Growth	Biology
Sexually transmitted infections		Accessing Health Services

The emphasis for most of the latter part of the twentieth century was on the mechanisms of reproduction and sexually transmitted infections. The values of policy makers have driven the curriculum.

Current Sex Education in Schools: Evolution of the Present Position

Until the advent of the 1988 Education Reform Act the planning of the curriculum was left mainly in the hands of Local Education Authorities (LEAs) and schools. Successive governments had not believed that their involvement in the details of the curriculum was essential. The 1944 Education Act had given LEAs the freedom to provide secondary education best suited to the needs and abilities of their pupils. Occasional papers were issued all on the general subject of health education such as Health Education in Schools Curriculum Paper No.14, 1975, Health Education in Schools Scottish Education Department 1974 and Health Education in Secondary Schools Working Paper No.57 Schools Council 1976 (Carr and Hartnett, 1996). The Schools Council (a curriculum generating body working closely with teachers) continued to work in this area and in 1977 they launched the Health Education Project, closely followed by the Curriculum 11-16, ‘*Health Education in the Secondary Curriculum*’ document (DES, 1978). None of these was compulsory for schools and no specific guidance on sex education was issued. Sex education came under tighter government control with the 1986 Education (No 2) Act section 18 (2) and the Circular 11/87 which explained its implementation to schools. These

stipulated that the governing bodies of school (county and controlled) should consider whether or not sex education should be part of school curriculum. The circular required governors to

...make and keep up to date a separate written statement: (i) of their policy with regard to the content and organisation of the relevant parts of the curriculum or (ii) where they conclude that sex education should not form part of the secular curriculum, of that conclusion

DES (1987: 11)

Further to this, circular 11/87 offered the following guidelines

Teaching about physical aspects of sexual behaviour should be set within a clear moral framework in which pupils are encouraged to consider the importance of self-restraint, dignity and respect for themselves and others, and helped to recognise the physical, emotional and moral risks of casual and promiscuous sexual behaviour...

DES (1987: 4)

The circular further clearly stipulated the need to place sex education in a moral and family setting, this being repeated in the 1996 Education Act Section 403 (1) ‘... given in such a manner as to encourage those pupils to have due regard to moral considerations and the value of family life’. This adjunct is repeated with a stress on marriage in the Education Learning and Skills Act 2000 (Avert, 2000a). This is problematic in our present diverse society where a family is not necessarily a married couple with children. The narrow focus here and underpinning value judgements makes teaching this difficult. The 11/87 circular also advocated that in no case should homosexuality be presented as the norm. The position was further complicated by the Local Government Acts of 1986 and 88 Sections 28 which forbade Education Authorities to ‘intentionally promote homosexuality or publish material with the intention of promoting homosexuality’ or to teach in maintained schools that homosexuality is an acceptable form of family relationship. This setting of sex education within a moral framework (Green, 1996) and latterly within marriage troubles teachers, as many of the pupils they address do not lead lives which support this code. The public, however appears to support the government stance (Jones, 1999; Travis, 2000).

After the Education Reform Act of 1988 the National Curriculum Council, (responsible to the Government for curriculum planning), issued guidance documents on cross curricula themes including health education, Document No. 5 (NCC, 1990). These themes never

gained credence in the education system, burdened as it was with a content-heavy, statutory National Curriculum. Document No. 5 advocated a spiral 'Brunarian' approach to health education repeating themes from infant to secondary level with increasing detail allowing pupils to revisit material and reassess learning. This document went, in its suggestion for the curriculum, far beyond the areas covered by the statutory science document, stressing as it did the need to consider thoughts, feelings and beliefs and relationships rather than biology. With the Dearing review of the National Curriculum in 1994 these cross-curricular themes lost validity and in fact at one point in the mid nineties the documents were not available. This made it appear that the thinking behind them had perhaps also been left behind and teachers had only the 1993 Education Act and a further Circular 5/94 (DfE, 1994) for guidance.

Pressures for Change in the Curriculum

After the advent of the Labour government in 1997 a group, established by Tessa Jowell MP, Health Minister, looked to the Department of Education and Employment for collaboration in launching a national advisory group on personal, social and health education in schools (PSHE). The main aim of this group was to inform children about the responsibilities of parenthood and to this end Tessa Jowell enlisted the help of the 'teen magazines'. They, in the past, have been castigated by MPs for promoting under age sex and publishing over explicit, sexual material for their young readership (Beasley, 1998). However, these magazines are read mainly by girls and Jowell's wish to make 'boys aware of their responsibilities as much as girls' (Beasley, 1998) would appear to have little chance of success unless the importance of PSHE in schools is promoted by its presence in the rewrite of the National Curriculum. Evidence from the agony columns of these magazines appears to show that many girls become pregnant through ignorance, and Jowell, in her speech to the Family Planning Association March 26th 1998, pointed to the need for a culture change and for children to be able to discuss sex easily with their parents.

In November 1997 the Sex Education Forum launched a charter for sex education with the support of the British Medical Association (BMA) in their campaign to give Personal and Social Education (PSE) and in particular sex education a far higher profile in the review of the National Curriculum (Barnard, 1997). This charter has five main areas including demands that all schools should set out clear and measurable objectives for PSE programmes and teachers should be given the skills and knowledge needed to deliver sex

education both thorough initial and in-service training (Sex Education Forum, 1998). At present this seems merely a dream as teacher education programmes are constantly squeezed into shorter hours and, in the directives for teacher education, there is no insistence on any specific training in this area (DfEE, 1998 circular 4/98; TTA, 2002). Whether the growing pleas from a wide variety of sources will be heeded, remains to be seen, but the present return to concentrations on literacy and numeracy and the virtual abandonment of large areas of the National Curriculum in the primary area do not bode well for the future of this domain of learning. Both the BMA (1997) and the Social Exclusion Unit (1999) have called for a rethink as regards the training of teachers in this area and at present the Teacher Training Agency is assessing the need.

In 2000 a revised National Curriculum was introduced, including the new subject of Personal Social and Health education (PSHE) for all students in primary and secondary schools. This is within the curriculum but non-statutory and not formally assessed whereas the other subjects are governed by statute.

School sex education was, until 2000, governed by the Education Act 1993 Section 241 (2) and Circular 5/94 (DfE, 1994) which advised on its implementation. The Act (consolidated by the Education Act 1996) allowed primary schools the choice of whether or not to deliver sex education and required these schools to produce a statement of intent whether positive or negative. If sex education lessons are to be included in the curriculum then the governors and staff had to produce a written policy and inform parents of content to be addressed. The science National Curriculum at Key Stages 1 and 2 covers areas such as growth and development from baby to adult, including information on the human body. In secondary schools sex education (biological aspects) is compulsory within National Curriculum science and again a written policy on all sex education content must be produced and parents informed of how the lessons will be delivered. AIDs and HIV education have to be addressed, but are outside the statutory science curriculum. Most schools include this area and relationships education in their PSHE (Personal Social and Health Education) programmes which may also be entitled PSE (Personal and Social Education), PSME (Personal Social and Moral Education), PSD (Personal and Social Development), PR (Personal Relationships), PD (Personal Development), or HEd. (Health Education). Some however, use form or tutor time to address these concerns, not having a formal PSHE programme.

In 2000 a new document *Sex and Relationships Education Guidance* (DfEE, 2000b) was issued to replace 4/95. This was a result of the growing concern over the rising rate of teenage pregnancy and the government's determination to halt the escalation. The Social Exclusion Unit in its *Teenage Pregnancy Report* (1999) had called for better sex education and the 2000 guidance document was the result. Clause 117 of the Learning and Skills Bill 2000 (Avert, 2000a) set the responsibility of sex education firmly in the hands of governors and headteachers not Local Authorities and gave powers to the Secretary of State for Education to produce guidance documents for schools. This for the first time included the overseeing of 'any materials produced by NHS bodies' (Avert, 2000a). Sex and relationships education was to be set within PSHE, the new National Curriculum subject for 2000 but in reality little had changed. The 2000 guidance left the planning and implementation of this area of the curriculum in the hands of governing bodies and retained parents' right of withdrawal of children from non-National Curriculum sex education classes. However, two clauses 1.22 and 1.23 (DfEE, 2000b: 11) specifically refer to boys and acknowledge that sex education had formerly been too girl oriented and that boys had not felt it related to them. Teachers are urged to engage boys as well as girls in the process. So, despite increasing government intervention in this area of the curriculum schools, to a great extent, are left to make their own decisions about this area of the curriculum as they are working with guidance documents not statutory programmes of study.

Review of the issues to be considered

The issues surrounding sex education in schools are varied and complex. There are debates over the aims of sex education, its place in the curriculum; it is indeed argued as to whether schools are the correct venue for delivering such sensitive material. Cultural and religious questions come into play, as does the ever-prevalent discussion on the establishment of a moral framework for sex education. The problem for teachers is interpreting this framework, which echoes the 1993 Act, the 1994 DfE circular and the 2000 Guidelines. None of these gives a clear guideline as to what is meant by a 'moral framework' though there is a stress on family and marriage. Confusion arises over the right age to begin such education, legislation, methodology, cultural differences and the use of single sex approaches, whilst arguments over the need for the explicit explanation of homosexuality and sexually transmitted diseases continue to worry teachers. The teachers themselves feel in many cases ill prepared to deal with this sensitive area of the curriculum and student teachers have little or no input from teacher education courses. The necessity to help adolescents make informed choices about their sexual behaviour is obvious, but is

the main mission to prevent pregnancy or to improve sexual relationships and sexual enjoyment in the young or to develop personal relationships and how best can these conflicting needs be satisfied by sex education programmes?

Sex education, as defined by the Sex Education Forum (1997a), is ‘a lifelong process of acquiring information and skills, forming attitudes, beliefs and values about sexual relationships, identity and intimacy’. It includes a wide range of areas ranging from biological facts to discussion about relationships and sexual health. The process of sex education begins from an early age when parents or carers are the educators and progresses to the more formal instruction provided in school, information gained from peers and reading and practical experimentation. Sexual responsibility is, in the opinion of Thomas (1996), best encouraged by education. It is a gradual, lifelong process so pupils in school come with a considerable amount of understanding and information gleaned from various sources on which the teacher must build.

a) What students want from sex education

Research conducted by Ingham (1997) and reported on the Today Programme on BBC Radio 4 in February of that year, appeared remarkable to commentators in that it purported to discover that the main complaint regarding sex education from school children was that there is an overemphasis on biological facts and insufficient discussion of emotional and relationship issues, particularly sensitive areas such as homosexuality, abortion and sexual abuse. In light of the legislation governing the teaching of sex education in this country this is surprising, as the DfE Circular 5/94, which gave advice on how the 1993 Education Act regarding sex education should be interpreted, set instruction firmly within the area of relationships.

The purpose of sex education should be to provide knowledge about loving relationships, the nature of sexuality and the process of human reproduction.
DfE (1994 para.9)

This problem with the overly-scientific nature of sex education is further underlined by Allein’s (1987) study cited in Thomas (1996) pointing out that only fifty per cent of fourteen to fifteen year old boys understood science lessons on sex which used terms such as ‘exchange of bodily fluids’. So, despite all the biology, students still lack understanding and knowledge about their own bodies.

However, the area most valued it appears by young people, namely relationships, can be avoided by their parents exercising their statutory right of withdrawing their children from such lessons. The worthy intents of the 1993 Education Act (consolidated by the 1996 Education Act), the 5/94 Circular (DfE, 1994) and the new Guidelines (DfEE, 2000b) therefore are not universally delivered and the worries of teachers as to the exact areas that can be covered may lead to a mere mechanical explanation of biology. Epstein and Johnson (1998) question how often a discussion takes place on such subjects as loving lesbian relationships and desire. They suggest that in most cases females are presented as victims of male desire which is 'dangerous' and female sexual desire and gratification is rarely mentioned.

The survey carried out by Avert and the School Health Education Trust (Lawrence et al., 2000) echoed all previous research findings, showing that twelve percent of children were not receiving any sex education and that there were significant gaps in the teaching of the skills necessary for negotiating relationships. This problem is compounded by the fact that children who wish to participate in sex education lessons beyond those covered in the National Curriculum, have no right of appeal against any decision made by their parents to withdraw them from part of the programme (Epstein and Johnson, 1998). The 'consumer' then appears in this case, as in the school choice debate, to be the parent as opposed to the child. The student has no statutory right to education in this field beyond the mere biological aspects commonly referred to as 'the plumbing' which is covered in science. The area of relationships and more particularly AIDs, HIV and STIs education can be out of bounds to a pupil no matter how much he or she wishes to receive the information on offer. After the age of sixteen is reached however, a child could, in theory, take its parents to court over the matter and if attending Further Education college will find that parents lose the right to dictate whether or not instruction in this area is received. This apparent anomaly has received little attention from legislators or curriculum planners. Epstein's and Johnson's (1998) concerns echo the OECD (1995) Report '*What society expects and what schools offer*'. This survey of thirty countries in the developed world reported that a significant majority of students felt that schools were well placed to teach subjects, but were lacking in ability to develop in their pupils the qualities that those students felt were more important than subject knowledge. One of the most highly rated of these qualities was self-confidence. Crossley (2001) points to the need to 'engage with people's moral choices' and that the issue of choice in relationships and in risk taking behaviours should be at the heart of any health promotion message. She believes that from an early age we

should be encouraged to examine the kind of lives we are leading, what our needs are and how this affects our self-esteem and our actions. Without this approach she believes, health promotion activities are wasted. These findings have great significance for the sex and relationships educator who is attempting to aid informed decision making.

b) Parental values and their right to withdraw children from sex education

Research has consistently shown that parents want schools to help them in the sexual education of their children, many feeling that they lack the requisite skills or knowledge to complete the task properly. The Marie Stopes organisation claims that one in six parents do not discuss sex with their children and one in four fail to talk about Sexually Transmitted Infections (BBC News Online, 2000). Parents look to teachers for expertise in this area, but many teachers feel unable to fulfil these expectations (Millar, 1998). It appeared that at last government might be listening to these concerns. After many groups expressed disquiet over the perceived failure of the White Paper 'Excellence in Schools' to stress the case for better sex education, hopes were raised by the setting up of the new Personal and Social Education Committee showing a stronger commitment to this area of education. Lenderyou of the Sex Education Forum (Wallace, 1997), advocated the overhaul of the curriculum putting 'personal and social education at its core'. This echoed the plea by the BMA in May of the same year asking that sex education should become part of the National Curriculum and a compulsory module within initial teacher training. More attention should be given to monitoring the delivery of sex education in schools and more resources supplied for teachers to use (Barnard 1997).

Parents may withdraw their children from non-statutory sex education in secondary schools, and from any sex education provided in primary schools, which is extra to the information provided by National Curriculum Science.

If a parent of any pupil in attendance at a maintained school requests that he may be wholly or partly excused from receiving sex education at the school, the pupil shall, except so far as such education is comprised in the National Curriculum, be so excused accordingly until the request is withdrawn.

Education Act (1996 Section 405:230)

The Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED) whose role it is to monitor standards of teaching in schools have reported that only 1 percent of children are withdrawn, at parents' request, from sex education lessons (open gov.uk). Anecdotal evidence from schools and

authorities shows a wide variation across the country, some ethnic groups withdrawing children at the rate of almost 50% in some schools. Both the 1993 Act and the 2000 guidance document clearly stipulate that sex education must be set in a moral and 'stable family' context (DfE, 1994: 6-7; DfEE, 2000b: 4). Kingman (1994b) points to the concerns of LEA advisors who believed that the guidance offered to parents on withdrawing children from lessons should have been clearer. In fact there is only a partial right of withdrawal and circular 5/94 did, in paragraph 30, make it clear that if something arises in a lesson through an unrelated topic and sexual behaviour is discussed, children will not have to be sent out of the room (Kingman, 1994b). However, this guidance did not appear to permeate down to the teachers involved and many were afraid of contravening what they perceived to be a punitive and misguided law (Whelan, 1995). This confusion for parents and teachers may result in children being withdrawn from lessons because of a misunderstanding of the position or for reasons such as mixed sexed classes, when discussing such topics, being disapproved of by parents who wish to be themselves responsible for this area of education.

c) The curriculum confusion

The confusion as to what should and can be taught, also affects the teachers, particularly in regard to any discussion of homosexuality in the classroom. This is due, in the main, to what the Sex Education Forum and the BMA suggest is a misinterpretation of the Local Government Acts (1986/88) Sections 28 (Barnard, 1997) which prohibited Local Authorities from promoting homosexuality or its acceptability. Stonewall the gay rights group appealed to the government to repeal this section of the act and this finally occurred in 2003. Chaudhary (1998) suggested it gave a clear message to teachers that homosexuality is a taboo subject and should not be discussed in schools. The BMA reported teachers as being confused and inhibited in their teaching as a result of this confusion but always believed that Section 28 did not apply to schools as the 1986 Education Act took precedence (British Medical Association, 1997).

The worries over the implications of this act were also rejected by the Sex Education Forum (1994) who believed that the 1988 Act had nothing to do with schools and sex education. This is supported by the Department for Education and Employment who quoted in a Guardian article of March 13 1998 stated that 'Section 28 of the act applies only to local authorities and schools are not prohibited from discussing homosexuality' (Chaudhary, 1998). However, it appears to be the former belief that held sway. Added to

this are the difficulties many teachers face in talking about sexuality to their pupils and according to researchers (Chaudhary, 1998; Houri, 1998; Douglas et al., 1999) the bullying of homosexuals by both pupils and teachers which is so rife in schools. As a result many teachers appear to prefer to leave the subject alone. What effect this has on pupils who believe themselves to be homosexual is hard to discover and it is only recently that research has been attempted in this area. A report published by Stonewall and the Terrence Higgins Trust (Chaudhary, 1998) suggests that abusive terms relating to homosexuals are common in schools and that teasing and bullying, both physical and mental are rife and little is being done by schools to prevent it. There appears to be a clear need here for some more detailed and open guidelines by government for teachers to allow this gap to be closed.

d) Teachers' commitments to sex education

Best (1999), in a paper exploring the impact of educational change on Pastoral Care and PSHE since the 1988 Education Reform Act, describes the decline of importance of these subjects in the school. This is due, he believes, to the increasing pressures on the timetable caused by the National Curriculum, its associated paperwork and bureaucracy and target setting. Teachers though knowing the need for help and guidance due to family breakdown, the rise in drug abuse and child abuse was great had less time to devote to this area of the curriculum. Best also believed that teachers who had previously sought a route to promotion via PSE and Pastoral care were regretting their decision as they saw colleagues who had stayed within traditional academic subject disciplines forging ahead.

Teachers appear to be under attack from all sides, for example when sensitive areas are not covered by teachers the school can be severely criticised by the judiciary. Epstein and Johnson (1998) report the comments of a judge involved in an incest trial, who to some extent blamed the child's school for not covering the subject of incest in its curriculum. This is further compounded by the problem which constricts the teaching of sexuality to a confined curriculum area, at a set time, to allow for parental preference. Many teachers feel that parents' right of withdrawal means that sex education must be delivered within set times and boundaries. This is constricting and lessons therefore lack spontaneity and teachers the ability to respond to the needs of pupils. They believe that, the law has prevented them from doing a good job (Epstein and Johnson, 1998).

e) Sex education in other countries

Schools play a vital part in the education of the majority of children about sexual matters. Western countries providing good formal programmes of sex education often have lower teenage pregnancy rates than those where sex education is not given such high priority. Sheldon (1997) describes the situation in The Netherlands where he believes the pragmatic tolerance towards sex and sex education can be traced back to the seventeenth century and to the necessity of tolerance in a country half Protestant half Catholic, with a large Jewish community. This approach which Sheldon argues would shock parents in the United States, lies at the heart, he believes, of the teenage pregnancy rates in the Netherlands, the lowest in the Western world. Sheldon quotes Professor Hugo Roling a sex education historian who has observed that 'here it is taken for granted that young people are fully sexually active at 13-14 years'. Sex education in The Netherlands begins at the age of five years and concentrates on relationships education. The government believes it cannot stop children experimenting so the 'the emphasis in Dutch is on plain speaking and practicalities' (Watchdog, 01.02.99) This is in marked contrast with attitudes in Britain and the spurious 'age of consent' for girls set by law at sixteen. This is brought firmly to the attention of teachers in the 1993 Education Act and the DfE Circular 5/94 with what are considered by some, veiled threats of action against teachers who give contraceptive advice to girls under the age of consent (Ray and Went, 1995). This attitude is further underlined by a remark made by Tessa Jowell then Public Health Minister, commenting on the rise in teenage pregnancies in 1996: 'Having sex at 12 or 13 years robs you of your childhood and it is the job of parents and teachers to safe-guard a childhood' (Boseley, 1998). To a certain extent the approach in the 2000 guidance document is softer but there are direct links made between underage sex and child protection issues.

In The Netherlands decisions about sexuality and sexual activity are left more to the individual and sex education programmes are not based on biology but rather on 'discussing what sexuality means to different people' (Ingram, 1997; Sheldon, 1997). Sex education there begins in the primary school and in the opinion of Epstein and Johnson (1998) is much more open than that in the UK. The course covers relationships, pleasure and desire as well as contraception and the need for safe sex. Young people are encouraged to go out to buy the condoms which they will discuss and examine during lessons, rather than these items being supplied by the teacher, as is the common practice in England. These authors and Sheldon (1997) maintain that this leads to more confidence and a safer attitude towards sex than in this country. However, it appears that in the United Kingdom

disapproving attitudes to teenage sexuality and expectations that the government should be involved in controlling sexual activity and education, through acts of Parliament lie very deep and will take a considerable time to change.

The Dutch positive attitude to sex leads to the provision not of family planning clinics, but institutes for sexual health and sexuality, where help is based on the premise that young people are able to make their own decisions; assertiveness training and the raising of self esteem lie at the heart of the work. This is in marked contrast to the climate in this country where schools are under pressure to become more rigid and controlling in their attempts to climb the league tables and there is an assumption that young people need to be protected rather than informed and empowered. Ingram (1997) believes that an open attitude leads not to promiscuity but to a greater respect for first partners and longer lasting relationships. He reports that young women in the UK are more likely than their Dutch counterparts to regret their first sexual experiences and that young men here are less likely to say that relationships are more important to them than just sex. Ingram (1997) believes that the context of first sexual experiences in The Netherlands reflects the greater respect for and comfort with members of the opposite sex felt by Dutch young people.

The Dutch experience also shows the need for the training of teachers to face what can be difficult subjects for children experiencing the insecurity of puberty. Sheldon (1997) describes the tasks set by teachers in The Netherlands, such as interviewing one's parents about the first time they fell in love and how you would react if your best friend told you that he was homosexual. Many teachers in this country would back away from such an approach with alacrity and it is easy too to image the reactions of some parents. Reinders (in Sheldon, 1997) goes on to stress the importance of teacher education. Teachers, he argues, can no longer be an authority, but 'facilitate a debate in which young people are the experts'. This seems to make total sense, but translating this approach to England and Wales, with government controlling what, and now in many cases how we teach, parental rights to withdraw their children, and a general attitude that we know best amongst adults, would appear to make the whole idea impossible.

In 1994 an editorial in The Lancet (1994: 899-900) concluded with the statement

More sex education does not mean more sex; it can mean a reduction in rates of sexually transmitted diseases and teenage pregnancy. Politicians should descend from the moral high ground and recognise that these are facts of life too

In contrast to this belief is that held by some agencies and parents in the USA. Wight (1997) describes the beliefs in New Jersey that an increase in teenage pregnancy rates can be directly attributed to the mandatory sex education programme begun there in 1984. These concerns are echoed here in Britain with a belief by some that more information leads to a higher rate of sexual activity. Whelan (1995) promotes an argument against detailed delivery, whilst the *Sunday Telegraph* in early 1993 had produced what Wight (1997) describes as a vehement article entitled 'The Child Molester' which accuses the Department of Education and Science of promoting sex education policies with the ultimate aim of destroying the family. However, other researchers in the USA show a higher teenage pregnancy rate in girls attending schools which promote total abstinence than in those where a more liberal attitude prevails (Ingram, 1997) so the evidence is somewhat less than conclusive.

However, the pregnancy rates in the various countries in Europe clearly demonstrate the United Kingdom is out of step with other European countries. In the Netherlands, Italy, France, Germany and Ireland teenage pregnancy rates have dropped steadily since 1974. Only the UK showed a marked rise from the mid eighties to early nineties and a further rise in the late nineties continuing into the twenty first century, with only a slight drop at the end of the nineties (Social Exclusion Unit, 1999; TES, 2002). These differences cannot be solely attributed to education or its lack but the low figures in The Netherlands do appear to match the reports of the early and sustained approach to sex and relationships education received by Dutch children.

The Case for Improving Sex Education in English Schools

The benefits of sex education as claimed by bodies and researchers such as The Sex Education Forum (1994, 1996a, 1996b, 1997a, 1997b), BMA (1997), Social Exclusion Unit (1999), Forrest (1998), and Blake (1997) are increased knowledge, improved relationships, higher self esteem, respect for others, lower rates of STIs, teenage pregnancy and many others, including later first intercourse. Improving sex education must therefore concentrate upon its importance in the school curriculum as regards time allocated, the use of suitable materials, methods of teaching used and the training of teachers.

A British Medical Journal Report (August 1995), based on a survey of 18,876 people aged 16-59, underlined the belief that sex education in schools does not cause early sexual experimentation and promiscuity. Boys who acquire their sexual information from school, as opposed to from their friends, are less likely to have intercourse before sixteen and girls

receiving this information are more likely to be virgins at the same age. Further to this, the report also discovered that adults who had obtained sexual information at school were less likely to have intercourse for the first time without using contraception. As this is one of the most common causes of teenage pregnancy, coupled as it is with anecdotal reports that many young people believe that you cannot get pregnant from first attempts at intercourse, the schools education programmes do seem to have some positive effects. These results were underlined by a report compiled by two Derbyshire training organisations which showed that 90% of students questioned considered that schools were their main source of sex education but worryingly that 100% thought that the information provided was either poor or not very good (Stenton and Cooper, 2001). These findings were underlined by *The National Survey of Sexual Attitudes and Lifestyles (Natsal) 2000* (Johnson et al., 2001). This report showed that schools were the main source of sex education for young people now between sixteen and twenty-four and that those who had received sex education were less likely to have intercourse before sixteen. This clearly demonstrates the value of schools' sex education programmes but the question is are all schools contributing as fully as they can and where can things be improved?

Sex education by schools has grown in importance as these surveys show. Whereas only 7.9% of the oldest men in the BMA survey and 19% of the oldest women reported school as their main source of information, the figures for 16-24 year olds are 19% and 28.8% respectively. In the Natsal survey however, schools were named as the main source of information well above parents. The differences in the figures here for girls and boys are most interesting. Where and at what time are boys receiving instruction? Is it earlier, from home or from friends? Girls do receive much information from magazines they read, but boys are not able to use this source, unless they read publications bought by sisters or girl friends. Much criticism has been forthcoming over the explicitly overt sexual nature of many girls' magazines, but boys do not have this kind of written material offered, as the so-called men's 'soft porn' magazines tend to exploit women and offer little realistic information to their readers. Rather they are portraying a fantasy with which men are expected to identify. This discrepancy between the sexes extends to knowledge of sources of practical help. Millar (1988) believes that boys are far less likely to know where to go to obtain information about sexual matters and only one third of boys aged 14-15 know where to obtain free condoms. Whilst 50% of 14-15 year old girls know where their local sex advice centre is, for boys the figure is half that, being only 25%. It does appear therefore that boys are poorly informed in comparison with girls, possibly to do with girls

being made the target of successive initiatives aimed at reducing teenage pregnancy rates. Godson (2001) points out that boys are less likely than are girls to receive good sex information from home, as mothers are less informed on male development and more concerned with preventing their daughters from getting pregnant. Boys it appears are still expected to 'sow their wild oats'. The Natsal survey (Johnson et al., 2001) showed that only 8% of boys gave parents as their main source of information on sex. These findings clearly demonstrate the need for boys in particular to receive good sex education in schools, as they are not receiving information from other reliable sources.

There appears to be little real evaluation of the evidence presented by either side of the debate regarding more or less sex education. Oakley et al. (1995) in the British Medical Journal claimed that most interventions in the sexual health of the young are not evaluated and that most that are, use unscientific methods to reach their conclusions. It appears that the most thorough studies have been conducted in the USA and that these show that programmes incorporating specific features have the most chance of reducing unwanted pregnancy. Wight (1997) also suggests that recent studies have strongly linked deprivation to high rates of unwanted pregnancy. As a result the Health Education Board for Scotland and the Medical Research Council jointly funded an initiative entitled SHARE in order to deliver and evaluate the effects of a prescribed sex education programme in eastern Scotland. The difficulties of evaluating existing programmes soon became apparent as the wide variety of content, methods of delivery and time allowed produced an impossible number of variables. What was noted in the original research however, was that the greatest problem in the delivery of good sex education programmes was the shortage of appropriately trained teachers. The SHARE researchers have identified what appear to be successful practices in the USA for the teaching of sex education, some of which do not appear to be included in lessons in Scotland. They have put forward a comprehensive programme for the delivery of sex education including the training of teachers. In this case the methodology includes a control group of schools whose teaching still follows traditional lines so comparisons with the SHARE programme can be sought and the evaluation it is hoped will follow the pupils to the age of twenty. There is at present therefore no clear guideline for sex education pedagogy or details of effective methodologies which can be used universally. Cultural differences appear to play a large part in determining acceptability as regards the didactics of sex education.

This Scottish initiative has not given particular indication of whether the sexes will be approached differently or the same programme used for both and the many variables have prevented a clear outcome. Other initiatives include work in London University on the use of peers to deliver sex education programmes, a course developed by researchers at Exeter University using teachers, peers and medical doctors in combination to deliver a programme and the use of students as tutors to aid teachers in the delivery of family relationship programmes. There are many initiatives countrywide but no overall guidance on what is successful as regards sex education which can be used by teachers in a variety of situations with the two sexes. It does appear to be clear from various sources that if sex education is to be effective it must include assertiveness training, teaching children how to say 'no' and include sessions on how to negotiate relationships. Healthlines (1995) points to the above mentioned work in Devon where Exeter University researchers developed programmes including these elements, using peers, teachers and health professionals which succeeded in reducing teenage sexual activity.

Given these issues it is clear that good sex education should have clear objectives namely, to inform, develop a responsible approach in the young towards sexual relationships and give students the ability to express their feelings and emotions in an articulate manner. It should be taught by well-trained and informed teachers who felt comfortable with the subject and have a clear understanding of the underlying pedagogy and have the ability to use a wide range of suitable methodologies. At present though there are many efforts to improve from both the public and private sectors and increasing government involvement there appears to be a missing dimension in the efforts, the boys. Blake (2002) then of the Sex Education Forum suggests that there has only been real interest in sex education since 1986 and in the sex education of young men and boys only in the last few years. As yet very little has been done by way of research or discussion in order to discover and address their specific needs.

The Need to Concentrate on Sex Education for Boys

For many years the main approach to sex education has focussed on the perceived needs of girls in the belief, according to Morgan (1996), that they are able to control their own emotions, boys being more at the mercy of their hormones. To girls then has come the responsibility for safe sex, the prevention of pregnancy, and the need to prevent the uncontrollable arousal of the male sex drive by, for example, adopting a non provocative dress code. Morgan also believes that the male's belief in his right to sexual pleasure has

resulted in the refusal to wear condoms despite the risk of infection to himself and his partner. Female sexual gratification is rarely discussed and until recently most anatomical diagrams of the female genitalia missed out the clitoris (Reiss, 1998b). How can boys therefore learn to understand the needs of and sources of sexual pleasure for women and give pleasure to a female partner if such vital information is missing from their education? Certainly many of the resources for sex education which invariably show or describe the 'missionary position', the one least likely to satisfy a women's sexual needs or to favour conception, leave much unexplained. The whole discourse is, according to many feminists, slanted from the need for male gratification (Epstein and Johnson, 1998).

It is easy therefore to understand boys' confusion over their expected roles. This, combined with the macho approach favoured in much male adolescent discourse on sex, is unlikely to encourage a satisfactory relationship. Morgan (1996) describes the material available to teachers as phallocentric and by describing vaginal penetration as the normal route to ultimate sexual pleasure for both males and females denies the reality that the majority of women receive greater pleasure from clitoral stimulation. Little available literature for use by teachers discusses this area. Boys therefore can be led to believe that a woman expressing the need for a different approach could be termed deviant or abnormal. Education must address the need of boys to understand how to give as well as to receive pleasure from a sexual relationship. This, however, is difficult ground particularly for the inexperienced, untrained teacher.

When serving as Public Health Minister, Tessa Jowell suggested that to tackle the problem 'boys need to be encouraged to discuss emotional as well as the physical aspects of relationships' (Cooper, 1998). In the same article the Chief Executive of the Family Planning Association asked for a quick implementation of a national policy which will guarantee clear and relevant information and advice for all young people to enable them to make choices which are based on clear facts

It does appear that government is finally coming to recognise the problem and the need for a new approach. The DfEE (2000: 11) Guidelines address this issue in point 1.22, stating

Traditionally the focus has been on girls. Boys may have felt that sex education is not relevant for them and are unable or too embarrassed to ask questions about relationships or sex. Boys are also less likely to talk to their parents about sex and relationships. For these reasons, programmes should focus on boys as much as girls at primary as well as secondary.

However, there is little actual guidance on how to approach this in a mixed sex class setting; the only suggestion for separating the sexes is in relation to biology and some ethnic minority religious requirements. The issues surrounding gender specific education in general and sex education in particular are discussed in the research.

Chapter 3 Teaching Boys: An Assessment of the Issues

The performance and position of boys within the education system is now a great source of concern. This issue is encapsulated in the higher attainment levels of girls in the 2000 Advanced Level examinations for the first time (Clare, 2000). There are differing opinions as to the cause of these differences in attainment. These vary from a biological/genetic perspective to a sociological stance, from boys have problems with education because of the makeup of their brains and the hormones present in their bodies, to society expects boys to behave in certain ways and has particular beliefs about what it is to be male. This debate is not new. For centuries the education of boys and girls was divided because of beliefs about their biological differences and perceived related abilities. Previously girls were seen as those who had difficulty in learning and particular areas of the curriculum were deemed either too difficult or unsuitable for them (Arnot and Weiner, 1987). There has often been a marked contrast in achievement between boys and girls, but now, it is boys who are falling behind across the whole curriculum (Arnot et al., 1998; Bleach, 1998; DfES, 2001; EOC, 2002). They lack interest in education and appear to be struggling, in particular with literacy. Educationalists are beginning to believe that boys require different pedagogy, teaching methodologies and have different learning styles to girls and that education must respond to these differing needs. It appears that young men, heavily influenced by social stereotypes of what it is to be male, have difficulty in discussing feelings and are concerned with the retention of a strong male image, particularly in the presence of girls. Questions have been asked since the nineteen seventies as to whether single sex or co-education positively affects academic results and whether a teacher's sex affects the performance of students. Although all these discussions are linked to the general education of boys, they all have important messages for the sex educator as regards methods of delivery, expectations about boys' behaviour, their response to sex education and the way in which a teachers should approach this subject area with boys. The various concerns that are being highlighted at present are examined below together with their relevance to the sex educator.

Gender and Achievement in School the Performance of Boys in the Education System.

It has long been noted that girls' and boys' achievement in school and response to education differs. Despite legislation, such as the Sex Discrimination Act of 1975, which attempted to prevent the worst aspects of gender stereotyping, and subsequent efforts to

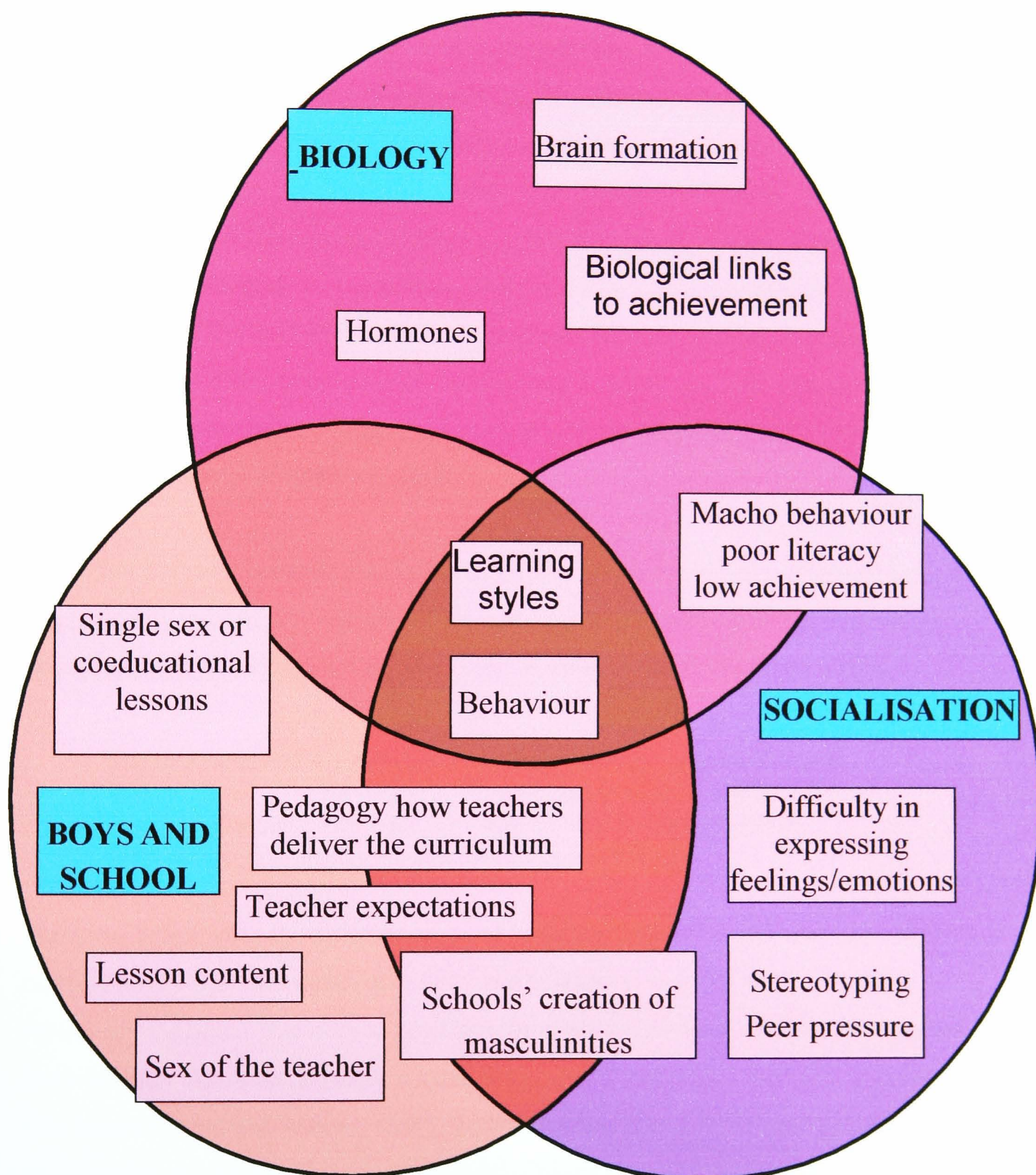
equalise the access of boys and girls to the whole curriculum, gender differences still have a great effect on the outcomes of the education process. During the 1970s and the struggle in society to aid perceived disadvantaged groups, much of the research undertaken in this area with regard to equality of opportunity in education was directed at girls.

More recently however, the spotlight has been turned in the direction of boys. Boys it appears are failing in school and society is in danger of producing an uneducated male underclass. From 1986 and the advent of GCSEs boys' results began to be overtaken by those of girls. Initially this was in the areas of traditional 'female' subjects for example, English, French and history (Social Trends 1993). However, this trend continued and grew until in 1999 the percentage of girls (53.2%) obtaining A*-C passes at GCSE outdid boys (42.6%) in all subjects (DfEE 1999) and was the widest gap ever known. The reasons for this change have given rise to a great deal of speculation and now action in the form of a government announcement on initiatives to improve the performance of boys (OFSTED/EOC, 1996; OFSTED, 1998). Boys failing in school is by no means a English phenomenon, as in all the G7 countries, with the exception of Japan, this gap exists (Greenfield, 2000). It would appear that boys' responses to sex education mirror their responses to education in general. The Times Education Supplement Editorial (TES, Oct 16 1998) questioned the ex Secretary of State for Education's belief that the literacy and numeracy hours will solve the problems of underachievement in schools in England and Wales. The article claimed that educational achievement is heavily influenced by the cultural attitudes to education in the country. If this is true, it is these attitudes that need changing, not the methodologies used in schools, and this cultural change would require a much longer time scale than the next few years. However, before we can accept this it is important to explore other reasons for differences in boys' and girls' attainment.

Explanations of Differences in Achievement - boys and girls

The concerns over the causes of the differences in achievement by boys and girls in education are many and inter-linked. These ideas are of particular interest to sex educators in that they must influence the way in which educators approach the delivery of sex and relationships education if success is to be achieved. Fig. (i) demonstrates the inter-linked nature of the influences on achievement discussed below.

Figure i THE INTERLINKED CONCERNS RELATING TO THE DELIVERY OF SEX EDUCATION TO BOYS



Biological

For many years the underachievement and slower progress of boys in school, in comparison to girls, was attributed to differences caused by the slower maturation rates of boys. The eleven plus examination made allowance for this in setting higher pass rates for girls than boys in order to ensure an equal division of the genders in grammar schools (Carr and Hartnett, 1996). Boys were thought to be late developers who would catch up when they matured physically and psychologically. Boys, it was considered, had more spatial ability than girls and had brains that were less suited to literacy based work, but gave them superiority in science and mathematics (Arnot and Weiner, 1987). This has to some extent been refuted by recent figures for GCSE and AL passes where it is to be seen that girls are catching up and overtaking boys in the so-called 'masculine' subjects (Hymas, 1995; OFSTED/EOC, 1996). In more recent times research has appeared that shows that from birth, differences in the male and female brain functions exist, which explain the greater ability of women to process and use language (BBC, 1996; Moir and Moir, 1998; Nobel and Bradford, 2000).

The belief in innate biological differences led to a search for suitable approaches for boys and girls who naturally, it was perceived, had different physical prowess, emotional strengths and creative abilities (Sayers, 1982 in Adams and Walkerdine, 1986).

The deficiency of the reproductive power amongst upper class girls may reasonably be attributed to the overtaxing of their brains. An overtaxing which produces a serious reaction on their physique.
(Maudsley, 1896 in Adams and Walkerdine, 1986: 8)

From this belief arose the differing types of education offered to girls and boys which has continued well into the twentieth century and to some extent still holds true today. Previously the belief that women need only be educated for domestic chores prevailed and more recently that some subjects, such as biology and languages, are more 'girl friendly' than others (Arnot and Weiner, 1987). Writers such as Hutt (1972) have pursued the premise that sex differences are essential for a healthy society. Males are portrayed as physically stronger more resilient, competitive and ambitious, whereas females are seen as possessing skills which facilitate communication and nurturing, all stemming from biological differences. Hutt emphasises the necessity of this difference in order to allow the sexes to fulfil their biological roles, for example motherhood requires dependability

whilst society is seen to have a passing effect on what is an 'already differentiated organism'.

Three main arguments to support the theory of biological difference, resulting in intellectual difference and types of behaviour have been put forward. The recessive gene theory (Burns, 1986) speculates that there is a recessive visual-spatial gene carried on the X chromosome, manifested in males, giving them superior spatial ability which is in females cancelled out by a dominant gene on the other chromosome. No such gene has yet been discovered. The second theory (Burns, 1986; Moir and Moir, 1998) is one of hormones, namely testosterone which has been shown to act during early development in male rats to produce aggression and could therefore possibly influence inquisitiveness and exploration in boys. However, the search for similar evidence in humans is still in its infancy. Also aggression does not always lead to male success at school and males alone are not solely responsible for aggression in the classroom. The third theory, that of brain lateralisation (Burns, 1986; Moir and Moir, 1998) is related to brain development, girls having it appears, earlier and greater development of the left side of the brain which governs language and communicative ability. This difference in brain development has been linked to the testosterone rush experienced by the male foetus and adolescent boys and is said to account for boys' differing responses to relationships and to the process of education. There has been a considerable amount of new research in this area and some findings do appear to support this theory (Moir and Moir, 1998). However, it is over simplistic to suppose that all girls are better at communication than boys, due to innate biological superiority, as it could also be argued that the socialisation of girls places much emphasis, from the moment of birth, on communicative abilities. Evidence suggests that girls are talked to, by parents and by other adults, more often and in different ways from boys which could account for much of the perceived differences in communicative ability (Whyte, 1983). Is this then an innate or learned ability or a mixture of the two? Nobel and Bradford (2000) point to research from the United States which appears to show that girls are born with a greater ability to discriminate between sounds than boys and that differences in linguistic ability are marked at three years and are not altered by nine years of schooling

Moir and Moir (1998) point to research on serotonin levels in the brain as a clue to the differing behaviours between the sexes. Low levels of serotonin and the enzyme monoamine oxidase (MAO) that disposes of used serotonin are linked to impulsive behaviour and a difficulty in concentrating. There is also a tendency to take risks, indulge

in anti-social silly behaviour and lose control. Men it appears have generally lower levels of these chemicals in the brain than females who are more likely to have better impulse, aggression and sexual behavioural control. This could, if true, be used to explain the response of boys to sex education, often seen as silly and immature and their risk taking attitudes towards sex.

Socialisation

In recent years the effects of upbringing and environment have been accepted as strong influences on intellectual ability and also on the eventual attainment levels of pupils in school. Slower however, has been the recognition that socialisation of children by parents, teachers and the media also has an effect on boys' and girls' reactions to education and to their ability and willingness to discuss difficult emotional topics. Only recently have researchers begun to examine girls and boys who do not fit into the accepted model and to look in depth at teaching styles and the responses of the two sexes to them. Theorists have examined the social construction of gender in order to explain differences between the sexes in terms of behaviour and achievement. Important within this is the idea of stereotyping where boys and girls are turned into and judged according to the concepts of masculinity and femininity expected by modern society. Problems arise, as this is a constantly changing model influenced by many areas such as, the media, culture and role models.

Social learning theory attributes behaviour to learned responses, children shape their behaviour into the way they perceive others expect them to behave (Bee, 1997). Schools which embody society's values both openly and within the hidden curriculum then proceed actively to reinforce the perceived differences by teachers' responses and expectations, subject choices and the role models they present. Despite the 1975 Sex Discrimination Act, subsequent efforts in schools and the National Curriculum, these differences still exist. Much emphasis has been placed in schools on the education of girls using a deficit model, where perceived short comings in the education of girls in maths and sciences has been addressed, but conversely poor achievements in English and foreign languages by boys have been, until recently, accepted. However, this does not appear to take account of the artificial social construction of gender. Sex is determined in most cases at birth but gender is on a continuum a line between masculinity and femininity, individuals being placed along that line. Responses may therefore be adjudged as masculine or feminine wherever the dividing line is placed and this differs according to an individual culture's rules. It is

for example in Britain considered by many as deviant behaviour for men to hold hands, whereas other societies see this as a normal expression of masculine friendship. These social rules govern the messages given to pupils by both the formal taught and the hidden curriculum.

Arising from this concept of gender and the beliefs and myths that surround it, boys and girls are expected to have different educational aspirations. This trend runs strongly through research in primary and secondary schools in the last twenty-five years the findings of which are now being echoed by OFSTED and HMI. (Delamont, 1990; O'Leary and Charter, 1996). Many researches discuss evidence that demonstrates the way in which nursery aged children fall quickly into their expected gender roles choosing gender appropriate toys and playing games and utilising space in a way which reflect expectations of their sex (Whyte, 1983; Browne and France, 1986; Wallace, 1987).

Other researchers take this theory further in that they do not believe that sex role modelling sufficiently explains the contradictory aspects of gender relations displayed by schools, parents and the community to adolescents. Kessler et al. (1985 in Millard, 1997) describe this phenomenon of ordering gender practices to enable the construction of various kinds of masculinity and femininity as gender regimes. Adolescents are caught, they believe, in a variety of overlapping regimes such as the regime of peer culture and the regime of the school. By far the most important pressure they believe comes from peer culture. Giddens (1991) echoes this belief in regimes, believing actions performed and repeated regularly reinforce gendered behaviour and build up into unconscious patterns of motivation that endure, despite efforts to change practice. This would possibly explain why gender expectations and behaviour are so difficult to change. Perceptions of male and female sexual roles fall into this category and little of this appears to be being addressed in sex education syllabi. Most teachers of sex education have noted the influence of the macho peer culture on boys' attitudes in lessons and above all the way lessons are directed towards the needs of girls, in particular the drive to prevent early pregnancy, a subject of little relevance to most boys.

Bandura's (1986) theory of social cognition is based on a more complex model than mere social learning, that is, reciprocity. He believes that our own thoughts about our behaviour influence our environments and they, in turn, alter subsequent behaviour.

People are viewed as self-organising, pro-active, self-reflecting and self-regulating rather than reactive organisms shaped and shepherded by environmental forces or driven by concealed inner impulses.
Pajares (2001:1)

Bandura (1994) discusses the theory of self-efficacy. He claims that self-efficacy beliefs determine how people feel, think, motivate themselves and behave. High beliefs in one's own capabilities foster better application to tasks and the ability to quickly recover from failure, whilst for those with low self-efficacy the reverse is true. Could this idea then be linked to boys' achievements and response to education? However, other researchers point to boys' inability to reflect on their own actions (Hannan, 1996) and that boys have inflated ideas of their own ability (Clarricoates, 1978; Houston, 1996; Bleach, 1998). According to self-efficacy theory boys would need to be helped to develop strong self-efficacy by mastery experiences (Bandura, 1994) and learn to overcome obstacles through perseverance. This would fit well with the ideas of Hannan (1996) which are addressed subsequently.

Nobel and Bradford (2000) point to the massive changes in society that in recent years have led to the disappearance of traditional male roles and occupations associated with men such as heavy engineering and coal mining. This has been coupled with the rise in jobs that favour skills traditionally seen as female, such as those in the service sector. They believe that for many young children the only 'workers' in the family are women and that for many men unemployment is a 'way of life'. This they believe affects the way in which boys respond to education as girls are defined by 'their work ethic'. However, boys see masculine success coming from a lack of hard work, as popular culture in films and advertisements appears to show that successful men have the trappings of success without having to work for them. Connell (1993) discusses men's place and practices in gender relations. He believes a new framework for masculinity is urgently needed and that schools play a strategic role in educating boys about what it is to be masculine (Connell, 1989). This construction of masculinity is complex and involves what Connell describes as 'multi-layered relations' between individual personalities, institutions and society all of which are demarcated by gender regimes.

This concentration on gender as a social construct must also embrace the aforementioned continuum on which biological masculinity and femininity are placed; there is a cocktail of

biological and social forces involved. We are not therefore dealing in sex education with two distinct groups but an ever-changing variety of sexualities.

Boys and Literacy

OFSTED (1993) in its Boys and English project pointed to boys' underachievement in many areas of the curriculum being caused, in the main, by their poor skills in the use of English and lack of ability in the language curriculum. These findings merely underlined those of earlier studies, for example the Assessment of Performance Unit had previously recorded significant differences between the sexes (Gorman et al., 1988) and the 11 plus examination had highlighted the greater achievements of girls in literacy (Millard, 1997). Girls and boys appear, according to these reports to have different attitudes towards writing and reading, girls showing more enthusiasm for this type of work. Boys appear to prefer more practical and problem solving tasks that do not involve much writing (Moir and Moir, 1998).

Wheeler (1984) and Minns (1993) both suggest that boys view reading as utilitarian rather than something done for pleasure whilst Millard (1997) describes boys as spending less time on reading fiction and less time reading overall than girls. This, it appears, reflects the home backgrounds of many boys in that, as Clark (1976) describes, teachers are often asking boys to do at school work in which the literary requirements are at odds with what they consider to be 'normal' masculine interests and experiences. Millard (1997) extends this picture, to include early years teachers' reports on boys' reluctance to write, showing a lack of interest in reflective and empathetic writing as opposed to girls. The OFSTED/EOC (1996: 18) report *The Gender Divide* reiterated these findings and encouraged schools to 'teach boys to maintain their written work coherently and useably and to meet deadlines'.

Millard (1997) places much of the blame for this problem in the secondary sector on the fact that, as she describes, most reading and writing education is left solely in the hands of English teachers, who are attempting to use less passive traditional styles of learning than are associated with these content heavy areas. The effect of this difference has implications for sex educators in that the material provided for boys needs to bear in mind this lower concern with literacy and lack of interest in reading fiction. Often materials in the field of sex education have used stories about girls and boys to promote discussion. It must be questioned if this is a good approach for boys, particularly those whose literacy skills are not good and who in general prefer factual reading materials.

Boys in the classroom

In the last twenty years research data has shown that boys and girls in the same classroom are known to create quite different educational experiences for themselves (Arnot and Weiner, 1987; Walkerdine, 1989; Delamont, 1990). Boys, it appears, are more difficult to discipline and cause more disruption accounting for many more cases of exclusion than do girls (Clarricoates, 1978; Brophy, 1985; Salisbury and Jackson, 1996). Teachers, on the whole, appear to perceive boys as more of a challenge to their authority and may as a result create a self-fulfilling prophecy. Much research has described the domination of teacher time by boys and the attempts by teachers to give girls a more equal position as regards time and attention being strongly resisted by boys who loudly complain of unfair treatment (Clarricoates, 1987; Goodenough, 1987; D'Arcy, 1991). Salisbury and Jackson (1996) describe the attempts of boys to dominate classroom time resulting in their eliciting more approval and disapproval than girls. Boys are seen as being loud in the class, attempt to dominate and sexually harass girls and perceive girls in their class as 'the silent or faceless bunch' (Salisbury and Jackson, 1996: 26). Even more they are intent on impressing other boys and in many cases do not know the names of the girls in the same class (Ibid). Millard (1997:9) points to the difficulties experienced by women teachers in attempting to control boys

Boys learn at an early age to control both the girls in their class and the women who teach them by adopting a 'male' discourse which emphasises negative aspects of female sexuality and embodies direct sexual insult.

This behaviour, according to Salisbury and Jackson (1996), merely reflects the general ethos of schools where the dominant power is male and the attitudes of male staff to female teachers underlines the perceived superiority of the male culture. Female staff they argue fit into this culture gaining authority by stressing their feminine approach and appealing to the masculinity of male pupils and staff. The divide between the sexes therefore is constantly reinforced by accepted gendered behaviour patterns and possibly one could speculate the 'survival' tactics of many of the staff. This culture permeates all aspects of school life but is particularly prevalent in the hidden curriculum. D'Arcy (1991) describes boys who appear to think that working with girls is beneath them and devalues their masculinity. Sexist language and the atmosphere of competition rife in so many schools further encourage male power. Salisbury and Jackson (1996) claim that since the advent of the National Curriculum and the league tables of GCSE and A Level results,

competition is used more often by teachers to achieve success and encourage learning because of the pressure they themselves are under.

OFSTED/EOC (1996: 22) suggests that in order to combat this schools should 'audit the range of role models to which pupils are exposed at school'. Also echoing the 1988 National Curriculum Document that schools should 'plan strategies to promote the personal and social welfare of their pupils' (p23). This is worthy a ambition but is in many cases asking schools and teachers to work against the main trends in society which is a difficult task for all concerned, especially for the pupils who can become confused and disoriented if asked to conform to seemingly alien regulations. The social model suggested by the National Curriculum and OFSTED/EOC is not clearly defined, teachers and schools being left to determine the meaning of social development. One may question what kind of society the schools are developing the pupils to inherit, the ideal or reality?

Of interest too is the sex of the teachers involved in sex education. In many schools the responsibility for the pastoral curriculum is dominated by females reinforcing sexual stereotypes and in many cases personal and social education curricula are written and controlled by women, many PSHE co-ordinators being female. Is this unimportant in delivering sex education to boys or does the hidden message here that personal and social matters are the province of the female sex the less important sex, produce a negative reaction from the male sex? Moir and Moir (1998) believe that this is merely a reflection of the differing biological patterns of males and females and that men interested in this area of education would have had less than the average male boosts of testosterone at the critical points in their development, a somewhat extreme view.

At the beginning of 1998 a government initiative aimed at improving the performance of boys in school was announced. This resulted in a great deal of speculation in the press as to the cause of boys' underachievement. The GCSE results of 1997 together with the SATs results of the same year had demonstrated the ever widening gap between the sexes with girls out performing boys at every level. Don Foster Liberal Democrat Spokesman on education, speaking to the Times Education Supplement (Rafferty, 1998) claimed that government targets for 11 year olds in England have not taken account of the serious under performance of boys in writing. This, he believed, would undermine the quest for overall improvement in standards. One of the main questions appears to be the difference in performance between authorities. In some areas of the country boys are twice as likely to

reach Key Stage 2 requirements (level 4) in writing than in others. Don Foster urged the government to allow the authorities themselves to have these comparative figures and to redress the balance between girls and boys by returning, from the age of six to formal teaching methods, with a planned curriculum for the early years of education, as is common in many European Countries. This could be the way forward for the delivery of sex education to boys, a return to a more factual curriculum delivered in a traditional manner. However, it would be difficult to address the areas of feelings, beliefs and empathy towards the needs of others, so desired by pupils, by concentrating on this methodological format.

Speculation over the causes of the shortfall in boys' performance is rife, with many possible explanations being put forward. The 'lad culture' defined as one in which peer pressure discourages boys from working hard or being seen to achieve in school was blamed, as was the fact that many primary teachers were female and the boys therefore lacked role models. Influences from outside school, the media, lack of manual employment possibilities for working class boys and poor parenting are suggested together with low teacher expectation. Teachers it appears expect boys to be unable to concentrate and to be more difficult to control than girls. It has been suggested (Radio 4 Today programme, Jan. 6 1998; Moir and Moir, 1998) that more male teachers are needed in primary schools to encourage boys to read and improve communication skills. Women teachers who predominate in this sector encourage pupils to read what they enjoyed as girls, that is, stories whereas boys enjoy factual books and do not respond to the same material as girls. However, Wragg, on the same programme, questioned the validity of this by describing the best primary teacher he had seen, the most successful at getting reluctant boys to read, that teacher being a female. Others question the so called underachievement of boys in pointing out that boys now are not doing any worse than formerly but that girls have improved considerably and boys have not been able to keep up with this change (Simmons, 1997).

Formerly it was believed that girls do better in single sex schools, but recent research by Smithers and Robinson from Brunel University questions the findings of previous studies (Lepkowska, 1998). They believe that the higher attainment records of these girls have more to do with the schools being selective than single sex. These schools they claim tend to recruit more from the higher socio-economic groups and had the added benefits of long being regarded as academic schools. The girls at these schools 'found the atmosphere

bitchy, spiteful and competitive and would not choose the same form of education for their own children' (Lepkowska, 1998). They acknowledged that the presence of boys in the classroom could be distracting but thought that boys would diffuse hostility between girls and that a mixed environment was far better socially and more related to real life than segregation. This raises questions for sex education teachers as to the place of sex separation or a co-educational approach in sex education classes.

Blumner (1998) takes a similar approach in reporting on a move in Harlem to set up a single sex girls' school. The irony of this according to her, is that the aim is to improve the performance of girls whilst the problem in Harlem schools, as she perceives it, is the poor performance of boys. It is boys who are under achieving there and boys who are being suspended at a far greater rate. She believes that single sex education is not the way forward for the twenty first century and that boys and girls will have to compete on even terms in the work place so early segregation is of no help to either. Lack of social and competitive experience between the sexes she believes could handicap future performance. Many sex educators appear to agree with this premise that co-education and co-operation between the sexes is the way forward.

The answer to this problem lies, in the eyes of some researchers, in the nature of co-education. In the seventies and eighties feminist writers such as Deem and Weiner were advocating the use of single sex schools to encourage the achievement of girls, who, in their opinions, performed better when separated from the stereotyping influences of the boys. Subject choice improved, as there was no necessity to appear 'feminine' by choosing non-masculine subjects and achievement levels in the 'hard' subjects of maths and sciences improved dramatically. Can the same solution work for boys and be used as a way of raising achievement? This is doubtful as girls, it appears are a good influence on the boys in their classes socialising them into better behaviour, which results in higher achievement and is also a useful asset for the teacher in managing pupils.

John O'Leary in *The Times* (1996) argued that single sex schools delay the onset of gender stereotyping. The report, based on research by Leicester University, showed a significant shift in opinion on the enjoyment of subjects between the ages of 11 and 16 depending on the type of school attended and that single sex schools appeared to aid girls in avoiding gendered subject choices. Teacher expectation as regard ability also has an effect here, corresponding to cultural expectations. If boys are perceived as difficult, unable to discuss

emotions and feelings, teachers approach these areas with trepidation and a self-fulfilling prophecy comes into play. Johnson (1973 in Whyte, 1983) and Sheila Wamahiu (in Murphy and Gipps, 1996) cite studies on teacher expectation and subsequent achievement in Nigeria and Rwanda, where the sexual stereotyping of girls and boys leads teachers to have fixed ideas of male and female academic abilities and acceptable behaviours in the classroom. It is doubtful if extremes such as the humiliation of girls by teachers, in order to favour the performance of boys, quoted by these authors is so rife in this culture but more subtle effects are present and affect teachers' approaches in the classroom.

Possibly here then is an issue to be considered. To improve sex education for boys are separate sex lessons the answer? Stereotypical attitudes could be discussed, macho behaviour challenged and specific needs addressed without the intervention and possible disapproval of the other sex.

Pedagogy and boys

Pedagogy has been variously defined as the art or science of teaching or, using a more work-like model, as how the pupils and teacher interact with the task set, the classroom surroundings and each other. Many forces interplay in order to produce the final effect. These include relationships between pupils and between teacher and pupils, the teacher's chosen method and style of teaching, which may vary according to subject content, the learning styles preferred by the pupils and the selection and presentation of the material of the lesson.

For many years the debate about how to teach boys and girls, which methodologies to employ has interested educationalists. It was in former centuries considered dangerous to overload the brains of girls as this could cause catastrophic effects on their abilities to bear children, brain expansion being linked to destruction of the reproductive organs (Carr and Hartnett, 1996). It is necessary to question the approaches to teaching girls and boys rather than merely discussing lesson content, assessment, physical provision and the gendered basis of knowledge as has been popular in the last two decades. In the 1970's and 80's feminists questioned these methods and often came to the conclusion that teaching in many classrooms was slanted towards the interests and needs of boys because they were more difficult to control and to keep interested (Weiner and Arnot, 1987). However, recent criticisms of GCSE examinations have suggested that the use of course work favours girls who are better at concentrating for long periods and applying themselves to work (Judd, 1996; Nobel and Bradford, 2000). In the past it appears that many lessons could be

criticised for a gender bias in the material presented. Examples of maths problems of trains and speeding cars, design and technology lessons spent constructing artefacts that were of no interest to girls and science lessons where girls were shown by boys how to set up the experiments were many. So too were textiles lessons where the articles made specifically chosen to discourage boys from choosing the subject and courses on child development where teachers were discouraged from accepting boys into the class as they might, it was suggested, cause problems when confronted by breast feeding mothers.

The problems of providing equality in education regardless of sex, class and ability have led to many possible solutions being offered. Is it possible or desirable to define a separate pedagogy for girls and boys or can allowance be made in every classroom for difference and diversity? However, the pedagogy of the classroom is embedded in that of the larger institution the school, its curricular goals and subjects, much of the content of which is now prescribed by the National Curriculum. Murphy and Gipps (1996: 26) point to the common assumption that being educated 'is a process of acquiring new ways of thinking, feeling and acting' and that this is considered by many to be ungendered. Much research points out however, that boys and girls have differing perceptions of themselves, are socialised differently and have to contend with the stereotyping of traits associated with the different genders (Murphy and Gipps, 1996). Salisbury and Jackson (1996) point to the problems that boys have with expressing their innermost feelings and the help they need to be able to share their anxieties with others, whereas most girls have an established support group of peers with whom they can explore their worries and problems.

There has been some support for a gender free approach to teaching, that is, the teacher ignoring the gender of the pupils (Houston, 1996). This is problematic as teachers are not always aware, even today, of the far-reaching effects of gender on the learning process and secondly the pupils themselves are ever conscious of gender. Without the teacher's intervention all the forces that gender processes invade and effect the classroom situation and pupils' reactions. Houston (1996) believes that this has led to the reconstruction of material, the removal of competition in sport and mixed physical education lessons. It does, however, offer severe problems for the teacher as boys and girls do demonstrate differences in performance, achieving differently at the various stages of education and often girls' success when it does occur is not recognised. This gender free approach therefore appears to have little to offer the sex educator as all the evidence points to boys and girls preferring different types of learning environments.

If therefore these differing needs have to be accepted is it impossible to equate difference and equality, or are they completely incompatible? Do we have to provide a gender blind approach to education, including sex education, in order to provide equality or would this denial of difference in fact produce more discrimination and inequality? The logical conclusion to accepting the incompatibility of gender difference and equality would be the segregation of girls and boys during the delivery of education even if they were in the same school.

However, with an area so difficult and sensitive as sex education the calming and supportive presence of girls could encourage a better classroom atmosphere and make it easier for the teacher to introduce sensitive subjects. This assumption however, is not supported by the research of Salisbury and Jackson (1996) who found that boys need far more time and attention from teachers to enable them to discuss sexual matters in a sensible, non sexist, non macho way than do girls. It is possible therefore that in the case of sex education a gender sensitive approach is required, with the use of a variety of methods, and a pedagogy that recognises the need for flexibility and a diversity of approaches. This diversity allows for equality in the assumption that both genders have the right to all aspects of education including that of relationships, allowing educationalists to hold an ideology whilst designing different pedagogies for girls and boys. This is certainly fraught with difficulties and the possibility of opening a debate on discrimination, but in many areas single sex classes within a mixed school has led to a raising of achievement levels in academic subjects (Wilce, 1997; Moir and Moir, 1998).

To expect that one pedagogical approach would lead to success for boys in overly simplifying the nature of masculinity. It is impossible and foolish to group all boys together with the idea that they are the same and require one set way of teaching. Boys differ amongst themselves equally as much as they are different from girls. Class, race, age, parental expectations and above all the attitudes of peers make an enormous difference. Wilce's article in *The Independent* (March 17th 1997) *The trouble with boys* describes how a school in a low income area, turned around poor results by encouraging a peer culture of achievement. What happened is described as a 'rollerball' effect. Boys began to encourage each other and express the desire to succeed. In the opinion of the school's deputy head the peer effect and the anti-education culture so common amongst boys is the main cause of their lack of success. He also pointed out their need for

individual help with study skills and organisation something which boys appear to lack. This viewpoint is supported by Moir and Moir (1998) who express the view that boys respond best to a structured framework which allows them to measure themselves against others or a 'don't care' culture arises.

A mentoring scheme, similar to that recommended by an Oxfordshire working group (Marshall, 1996), helped the boys to see what was required to achieve their ambitions, rather than relying on the misheld belief so common amongst them, that they were inherently superior to the girls in intelligence and that this would see them through to success. This article is supported by the findings of the OFSTED/EOC report (1996).

Murphy and Gipps (1997) raise the question as to whether the child centred approach to education has given rise to a corresponding individual approach to pedagogy as opposed to a whole class pedagogy. They criticise many feminists, whose struggle for equality of educational opportunity for girls has led them to treat girls as an indistinct group thus denying their different needs. Gordan (1996) also supports this concept. Pupils, she claims, are no more equal than the average citizen, socially, economically or politically. The construction of what she terms 'neutral pupils' helps neither gender. Dimensions of inequality can have different meaning for girls and boys but there are areas in which inequality intersects gender divisions. Class, ethnic origin and disability are three such areas which may cross the gender divide. Certainly recent reports, including comments from Chris Woodhead ex Chief HMI, have highlighted particular problems in schools with white working class boys, who are in more danger it appears of failing in school than their middle class peers who have greater motivation and parental support (O'Leary and Charter, 1996).

Peter Downes, former president of the Secondary Heads Association, speaking to members of the Advisory Centre for Education (ACE) at their 1997 AGM, further accused schools of currently employing teaching methods that favoured girls as opposed to boys. Boys find staying 'on task' difficult and need help to become self-motivated and concentrate on work, requiring a more structured approach by the teacher than do girls. His opinions have been replicated in research undertaken in Canada where the poor performance of boys is causing particular concern and is being blamed on the child centred collaborative learning practices (Greenfield, 2000). Downes advocated that teachers examine their styles to accommodate boys' needs using a more interactive style, as boys, left to get on with work,

waste time and wander around the classroom at any opportunity (ACE, 1997). He also advocated that teachers explore different seating arrangements as placing girls and boys together can enhance performance. Whether using girls as a means of social control on boys is an acceptable practice needs to be explored. It is obvious too, to those who have worked in classrooms, that this kind of arrangement can result in girls doing all the organising and most of the work, whilst boys take the rewards when the work is completed. Sex education teachers must therefore consider the varying needs of boys and girls and change teaching and learning strategies so both sexes needs are met by classroom practice.

Questioning all these ideas however is research conducted by Sunderland University comparing children in Russia, England and America. Budge (1998) reports that the researchers for this project have concluded that the main causes of poor performance in the education system are not teaching standards, the curriculum or social deprivation, but the attitudes of the children and their families to education. There appears to be a direct correlation between attitudes to learning and performance in mathematics. Russian children work far harder and longer than their English counterparts, have a less high opinion of their ability and enjoy school more, though their teachers are far more critical. There appears still to be a desire to be an 'educated person' The contrast between peer pressure to work hard in the different cultures is stark. Adolescents in St. Petersburg suggested in a ratio of three to one that peer pressure makes them work harder, whilst for English children of the same age the pressure worked four to one in the opposite direction. In the area of sex education this is further bound up with stereotypical behaviour patterns and the desire of boys in particular to appear 'cool' and 'hard' to their classmates (Salisbury and Jackson, 1996). For the sex educator this macho culture problem is probably the most difficult one to overcome though Salisbury and Jackson (1996) profess that separate sex classes can help boys face this 'anti-swot' culture and overcome it. Boys, they believe, need time to break through this destructive pattern.

Learning and Teaching Styles

It does appear from research that there is a distinct difference in the learning styles favoured by boys from those preferred by girls. Perry (1968) followed by Bodi (1988), Cranton (1992) and McNeer (1991) cited in Blackmore (1996) describe a developmental sequence through which young men pass in their thinking modes. These authors believe that male students see the world in a polarised manner believing that there is one right way

in which to answer a question. They appreciate diversity of opinion but tend to believe that tutors merely use diversity to exercise the minds of students in order to make them seek the correct answer. They also appear to believe that diversity of opinion exists merely because no one has yet found the correct answer. However, they do believe that everyone has the right to their own opinion and that others should accept this. This view is supported by recent research from Cambridge University which has examined the failure of boys in the school system over the last ten years. There is agreement that some GCSE questions favour girls' better writing styles but believe that many more influences are at work than a mere change in the way testing is carried out. The report advocates the use of more structured quick exercises which have correct answers when teaching boys who find coping with open ended tasks which require thinking, reflection and speculation difficult (Judd, 1998). It appears that many researchers themselves tend to stereotype male and female characteristics. This simplistic approach may be part of the problem.

Hannan (1996) describes boys as having a trial and error learning style, whereas girls have a much more methodical approach. He is a 'speculative thinker' whereas she has a 'language-centred sequential learning style and is a reflective thinker' (Hannan, 1996:21). Boys Hannan believes, have relationships with objects, whilst girls make the more natural students, having been raised as 'the talkers' able to express and reflect on their feelings. Added to this, Marshall (1996) believes, is the culture of maleness prevalent in schools, where to be seen as a 'boffin' is to be a sad person. Working hard to achieve good results is perceived as conformist and to conform is girlish. Marshall (1996) also puts forward the present day dilemma under which schools function. Schools exist in a society which, especially in this day of tests and league tables, reward conformity, whereas the high flyers in society draw attention to their own achievements, interact by arguing and problem solving, all of which helps them achieve in the workplace where the conforming female is overlooked. Are schools then the problem not boys? Hannan suggests developing what he terms a wide variety of approaches, but based on a step by step sequence of learning. He advocates the use of a series of questions which start from the basic knowledge already possessed by the student and then use a 'descriptive-reflective-speculative process' (Hannan, 1996 in press). The challenge presented needs to be communicated at the start of the exercise together with how it is relevant to the subject under discussion. It is essential he says to demand active student participation, whilst at the same time developing reflective analysis, an area of boys' thinking that is generally weak and always praise and reward participation. In fact he advocates that a teacher practises 'the vocabulary of

praise'. He believes that teachers need to support planning by structuring what is expected from the pupils for example, asking for five points in a story or analysing five steps in a science experiment. This is helping boys to plan work logically, encouraging analysis of the tasks and organisation of the problem solving. Marshall (1996) agrees with this approach comparing boys' negative responses to maths lessons that use a 'working through the book' approach to their positive attitudes to a problem solving fun activities. She also believes that this kind of teaching encourages girls to be more forthcoming and gain the skills needed in the workplace which they often lack and which she believes are further disadvantaged by the current push for conformity, so favoured by recent government directives.

Boys appear to need 'more imaginative teaching' (Moir and Moir, 1998) and be given tasks which are performance related (Davies, 1998; Nobel and Bradford, 2000). They need support to be able to discuss personal sentiments (Salisbury and Jackson, 1996), as, according to Davies (1998) most of their 'chat' at break times involves sport not feelings. Rather they practice competitive ways of speaking and their ability to employ sexist language as a strategy in mixed groups makes boys have a distinct advantage over girls in group situations. They also believe that boys are more willing to take risks in a classroom situation than girls and to play for laughter through their use of language. Quieter boys are often ostracised by others and become even more silent as a result. Boys need to be helped to value open ended tasks and to think about 'human values, wider social issues and their personal lives' (Salisbury and Jackson, 1996).

Shulman (1987 in Bennet and Carre, 1993) identifies a variety of knowledge bases required by teachers in order to make a subject comprehensible to pupils. These include what Shulman describes as 'pedagogical-content knowledge'. This is knowledge of content that is 'most germane' to its teachability. This is the way in which ideas in a subject may be represented and formulated so as to make it comprehensible to others. The question here is therefore, do boys and girls require different pedagogical-content knowledge from teachers, or can essential knowledge be presented in such a way that the method is equally good for both sexes?

Bennet (1993) agrees with findings in case studies undertaken by Grossman, Wilson and Shulman (Bennet, 1993) and believes that content knowledge affects not only what, but how teachers teach. The more specialist the knowledge possessed and the more variety of

teaching methods subsequently attempted, the more likely are teachers to stress conceptual understanding. This has an important message when linked to the teaching of sexual matters, in that it could be used to underpin a suggestion that the same sex of teacher and pupil would bring the best results. Certainly it points to the need for a good knowledge base and though most teachers have experience of sexual activity few are trained how to pass on this experientially gained information and many, according to authorities such as the Sex Education Forum (Lenderyou and Ray, 1997), are deficient in essential knowledge.

McDaramid, Ball and Anderson (1989) take this argument of pedagogical-content knowledge further, insisting that if pupils are to understand material presented to them by teachers they have to connect it to the prior assumptions and understandings they bring into the classroom with them. This echoes work done in the late eighties and early nineties by the Best of Health Team from Southampton University and the HEA whose doctrine of 'starting where children are' is well known in health education circles. When this is taken into account then the best way of representing the knowledge to pupils can be selected and this in turn presents pupils with messages about the knowledge given, by the tasks they are required to undertake. It could be suggested, therefore, that sex education lessons taught by the handing out of worksheets whilst the teacher gets on with something else 'important' could send strong messages to the pupils about the worth of the knowledge they are expected to absorb. It is interesting also that for at least a decade there has been grave concern by the authorities running the education system in England when investigations have uncovered maths, science and modern language lessons being taught by teachers untrained in the specific subject. Not so health education; other countries, including many in Europe, see training in this field as essential as it is for other disciplines. In fact Grossman et al. (1989) insist that teachers' beliefs about subject knowledge are equal in importance to their beliefs about learning and teaching and this influences choices of activities and lesson objectives. Teachers they believe, must be given the opportunity to examine these beliefs, or any professional training attempted is unlikely to radically change their ideas. Moreover teachers who possess a good depth of subject knowledge can enable students to develop a flexible attitude to the subject.

Blake (1997) advocates that teaching approaches with boys should at all costs avoid too much paper work and that active learning is best. He affirms that boys will often say they understand or have experience when in fact they do not, so demonstrations and practical

exercises, such as in the use of condoms, must be employed to ensure clarity. He suggests starting with an exploration of boys' knowledge of themselves and their own bodies, echoing the position of the Best of Health Teams' findings and advocates the avoidance of girl oriented resources which he believes alienate boys.

A question also arises regarding the interaction of the different sexes in delivering sex education. Is it better for men to work with boys and women with girls, or is the gender of the teacher unimportant, or less important than empathy and training? Wood (1998) describes a successful model in one particular school, as consisting of separate lessons for boys and girls on contraception and sexually transmitted diseases using teachers of similar sex to the group. A bringing together of the groups to discuss relationships then follows this. He further points out the need to challenge the expectations of boys as regards their role in the use of contraceptives and in maintaining their own sexual health.

However, there can be problems with using same sex teachers if those teachers cannot cope with the open discussion type of methods required. Kenway et al. (1998) describe a maths teacher hopelessly out of his depth when attempting to introduce a policy against sexual harassment, as he was not used to boys disagreeing with what he put forward in lessons. His response was to resort to what these authors describe as 'institutionalised power', a common masculine response. They also describe a female teacher who, with the same material, opens herself to abuse from the boys by asking for descriptions of harassment they have witnessed. As Kenway et al. (1998) point out this creates a shift in the power base from the teacher to the boys, who vie in attempts to embarrass and shock her.

Thorne (1993) suggests that good mixed sexes interaction is more likely to be achieved when teachers carefully structure activities and when the individuals in the group have the requisite skills in order to communicate effectively. To achieve this training would have to take place throughout all the years in school, long before sensitive subjects were introduced in to the curriculum. This then at present is not the answer, but Thorne does give some valuable advice for mixed sex group teaching. Groups need to be kept small, thus preventing boys from gaining a platform from which to 'show off' and hold forth, demanding attention and being 'naughty' (Thorne, 1993:169). The required behaviours need to be made explicit and to be effective need to be continually affirmed. He describes the findings of Australian teacher Ellen Jordan, who believes that teaching practices that

ignore or play down gender differences may have unintended negative consequences. They encourage boys to develop definitions of masculinity that are directly opposed to what they perceive as feminine, that is co-operative and gentle and as a result they become loud and disruptive.

Mac An Ghaill (1994) pinpoints the masculine perspectives so dominant in secondary education and Wood (1998) raises the question of research into this area which has formerly targeted girls. In order to relate to boys and be effective when delivering sex education Wood (1998) believes that we must challenge this stereotype of masculinity and encourage boys to reject it and express their feelings. Other researchers go further than this and suggest that in order to teach sex education to boys we must have an understanding of male sexuality. Eardley (1981) for example, questions the way boys are raised to expect, as did their fathers that a women's' role is to cater to men's needs both emotional and physical, thus rendering men helpless in organising their own lives. He would take the curriculum of sex education further to include physically caring for oneself, for example, cooking, cleaning, washing and ironing. He agrees with Salisbury and Jackson (1996) and Wood (1998) that boys feeling shame and remorse or worrying over a sexual relationship cannot discuss this with their peers, as it challenges the concept of masculinity which is part of popular culture.

Salisbury and Jackson (1996) clearly believe that boys' responses to particular methodologies require careful attention. They are critical of what they perceive as the masculine curriculum, favoured by government and schools, which they believe encourages the stereotyped masculine behaviours which are approved of by society. Boys perceive school work as having a concrete end product as opposed to consisting of 'interactive collaborative activities' (Salisbury and Jackson, 1996:27). They believe boys see these types of activity as a threat to masculinity and opt out of such tasks by becoming disruptive and failing to stay on task. Girls however respond well to this type of delivery and welcome opportunities presented to them. Wood (1998:97) even suggests that one should expect and to a certain degree accept the bad behaviour of boys when dealing with sexual matters and advises would be health educators to be prepared to have to arrest the attention of 'potentially bored, restless and resentful pupils'. He advocates spotting the potential disrupters early in the session and 'gaining their respect' (p 98) before trouble starts. Anderson (1997) looks to the causes of this type of behaviour and echoes Salisbury and Jackson (1996) by claiming that boys use this as a front to hide their feelings of

insecurity and vulnerability. This, she believes, is particularly in relation to their fears regarding homosexuality, boys worrying that they will be seen as less than male by their peers and responding with extremes of behaviour. Both Anderson (1997) and Wood (1998) point to the necessity for giving boys the time to examine their inner feelings, which it appears, advocates some single sex delivery.

Wood (1998) also advocates rejection of the didactic approach for boys and suggests using a touch of flamboyancy and dynamism. However, he also emphasises the place of what he describes as traditional teaching methods such as repetition and the emphasis of key points, which is rather at odds with his advocated non-didactic approach. There appears to be some conflict of opinion as to the best way forward amongst the experts engaged in this field. Wood however is not a trained teacher but a health professional, many of whom are used in schools to teach this sensitive area.

Using adults other than teacher (AOTs) is common practice in many schools. Teachers believing that their own knowledge in this subject area is limited and faced with difficult classes often look towards people they feel have more expertise. Indeed the BMA recommends that schools involve 'doctors and other health professionals more but that teachers should continue to play the lead role' (Barnard, 1997). The problem with this approach in the experience of the author is that the quality of help is highly variable from excellent to embarrassingly dreadful, underlining the need not only for confidence in subject knowledge but also the ability to deliver that knowledge to young people. Further to this the BMA and the new Guidelines recommend the use of case studies to enable young people to discuss sexual matters without having to relate their own experiences which could lead to problems for both pupils and teacher (BMA, 1997; DfEE, 2000a).

These ideas about learning styles and teaching methods relate to classroom practice including those employed in sex education lessons. Sex education is a highly sensitive and difficult subject to approach, so using methods to which boys are more receptive should increase the chances of success.

Sex Education and Boys

The OFSTED/EOC report in 1996 intimated that since the HMI survey *Personal and Social Education in some Secondary Schools* (1988: 21) which,

criticised PSE courses in general and found that there was little sign of potentially controversial aspects of work being explored in sufficient detail, more attention often needed to be given to evidence in discussion, and to the underlying moral dilemmas.

little had changed. The report suggested that some schools have had success in encouraging boys to take PSE more seriously and to become better at listening and discussing, by using single sex classes.

The BMA in its report *School sex education good policy and practice* defines good sex education teaching as focussing on 'sexual feelings values, communication and relationships' becoming part of an education 'for life' which is delivered through a comprehensive personal and social education programme (Barnard, 1997).

There appears to be a growing movement to consider the specific needs of boys as regards sex education. This echoes to some extent the major concern over the lack of achievement of boys in current education, but also has links to the other concerns of the need for parenthood education and the breakdown of family life. The Sex Education Forum (1996) and Simon Forrest (1998) believe that by failing to meet the needs of boys, society is endangering their emotional and sexual health and failing to help them express their true feelings and aid them in asking for help and advice. 'We have a rising rate of suicide amongst boys and respond with methodologies in schools which leave them 'bored and disruptive' (Sex Education Forum, 1996a).

According to Forrest (1998) and Davidson (1996) boys often appear to be uninterested in sex education and many educators see them as beyond help and leave them out of the general picture. Teachers report that boys mess about and 'act up, do not ask questions and refuse to take it seriously' (Forrest, 1998:2) Coupled with this there appears to be a reluctance amongst parents, particularly fathers to talk to boys about sexual matters. Hirst (1994), from her research in Sheffield describes the apparent embarrassment between boys and their fathers when discussing sexual matters. She recounts a typical exchange between a boy and his father on the subject of HIV and Aids, where the parent advises his son not to do anything stupid because of the Aids problem. He asks the boy if he had covered the topic in school and the boy responded with the information that he had seen it on television. Hirst describes the father's response to this information as 'good'. This belief

that boys are poorly served at home as regards sex education is echoed by Lenderyou of the Sex Education Forum (Kingston, 1997) and Goldman and Goldman (1982) who stress that mothers find it easier to talk about sex to their daughters than they do to their sons. Goldman and Goldman (1982) also stress the importance of students having confidence in their teachers and their suspicion that teachers cannot be trusted and gossip and joke about pupils in the staff room. Without this trust children will not ask teachers what they need to know. The research conducted by these authors also demonstrates the lack of confidence students have in their teachers' knowledge of sex and relationship matters.

Males also have to withstand according to Davidson (1996) and Pyke (1996) the image of being a 'problem'. Forrest (1998) agrees and points to the perpetual attitudes of educators with regard to the need for girls to protect themselves from the aggressive advances of men. Women are presented as the victims and men as those whose feelings are difficult to control. Women and girls are expected to be mature and act in a responsible manner whereas boys are constantly bombarded with stereotypes of being 'a bit of a lad' and that male culture is characterised by 'not wanting to appear hard working' (Pyke, 1996). These attitudes exclude the boys who feel themselves to be sensitive, supportive and responsible and those whose partners are not girls but boys.

The media provides an ongoing source of the myth of boys' inability to control their desires and the aggressive nature of their responses. Girls are constantly presented as the cause of male aggression. Candace Porter, an eleven year old involved in a school shooting in Arkansas was described by the *Mail on Sunday* as 'the little girl who prompted a massacre' (Weale, 1998). Interestingly in a similar case of child killing, the baby James Bulger, was seen as totally innocent. Candace however, the perceived cause of the school shootings, was labelled as a femme fatale as it was her rejection of a relationship with Mitchell and her subsequent friendship with another boy which was seen by certain sections of the media as the reason behind this terrible event. This, despite the relationship being reportedly one which lasted only four days. It appears that adult standards, terms and descriptions are being applied to playground friendships with girls constantly being given as the cause for boys' lack of control (Weale, 1998). The inference here is clear, if Candace had in some way behaved differently the massacre may never have happened. The message that this gives to both sexes is frightening and rarely challenged or discussed in the school context.

Forrest (1998) further believes that boys are neglected in sex education because they present such a challenge as regards behaviour and the myths that surround this. Boys are presented as 'homophobic, misogynistic, uncommunicative and immature' (Forrest, 1998: 3). Salisbury and Jackson (1996) to some extent support this idea, acknowledging that many of the stereotypes are apparently true, unless teachers are prepared to work hard at going beneath the surface attitudes presented. This echoes the findings of feminist researchers in the seventies and eighties; boys expect and receive more attention in the classroom and more privileged treatment than girls and the main focus of their attention is on proving their masculinity. The nineties authors above attempt to explain this phenomenon, by pointing to the collapsed morale of many boys and young men who are unclear about their roles and see little joy in the future. There is great difficulty, in areas where no one in the family has a job, in persuading boys that any kind of education will lead to a better future. Sex education is seen as establishment and authority led and the only way to prove maleness is to be 'anti-authoritarian', a role model established because adults are so 'disaffected' (Pyke, 1996).

Baker (1998) aligns himself with those experienced in working with young men and suggests that to get boys involved and interested in sex education material must be approached from their point of view rather than from an adult's standpoint. He agrees with Davidson (1996) whose work with boys has led him to believe that they find personal exposure approaches to sex education inappropriate whilst girls respond well. Baker advocates entering into a true dialogue with boys and suggests the use of theatre or video as a means of getting close to boys' needs. This work needs to begin with boys between eleven and thirteen as he believes that much sex education comes too late. The direction needs to be firmly towards the needs of the boys. That is rather than prevention of pregnancy, the need for boys to protect themselves from sexually transmitted diseases and from becoming a father too early. He believes, as does Forrest (1998) that this will receive a more positive response. The Family Planning Association in its drop-in clinics provides the opportunity for boys to call in and be sure that a male worker will be on hand to give advice as required. In East London they attract fifteen to twenty young men a week mainly between the ages of twelve and fourteen. This supports the advice from the Sex Education Forum (Lenderyou and Ray, 1997) that boys want to talk, but it is necessary to ask them what they want and that when educators do that the results are very encouraging.

The question arises as to whether boys should be separated out for some or all sex education lessons. At present there appears to be no general agreement on this though most practitioners believe that at some point boys should be allowed to work in single sex groups. Boys according to the Sex Education Forum (1996b) do value the opportunity to work with a male for at least some of the time. It is important that they see role models of a wide range of masculinities involving men in training roles and supporting other men in caring roles. Certainly in some cases, for example, in schools where most of the pupils are Muslim it would be appropriate to separate the sexes for some aspects of sex education, that is, being sensitive to the needs of different cultural and religious groups (Kingston, 1997). Measor et al. (1996: 277) describe sex education classes where, though lesson plans are identical the reactions of girls and boys was totally different. Girls are described as 'the picture of conformity', whereas boys fooled about throwing contraceptive devices around the classroom. These authors call for some separation of the sexes in sex education lessons to allow girls to benefit, as boys they believe react negatively, whether with girls or apart from them. It appeared to make no difference if the teacher was male or female, boys constantly behaved badly. These authors also suggest that more men should be involved in sex education classes with boys having found only one male teacher in all the lessons they observed. However, Epstein and Johnson (1998: 183) disagree believing that separation of boys for sex education would merely

exacerbate the generally competitive macho performances of a significant proportion of the boys unless strategies were found to disrupt and subvert the hegemonic discourses of masculinity and masculine sexualities which pervade schools.

These authors go further in explaining that to admit to any worries, doubts or ignorance is far too difficult for boys in the present climate of aggressive heterosexual maleness so prevalent in school. They describe male teachers as adopting a 'mateyness' which is based on the 'misogyny and homophobia' to help them control macho behaviour. This agrees with Kenway et al. (1997:32) who believe that single sex classes for boys provide teachers with the opportunity to exercise 'old style masculinity'.

However, the case for or against separation of the sexes appears unclear as separation does appear to give girls an improved experience in the classroom (Epstein and Johnson, 1998). Kenway et al. (1997) also claim that if the subjects of gender relations and differing masculinities were addressed in sex education teachers would begin to work in the most

difficult but most essential areas of sex education. Epstein and Johnson (1998: 184) agree and add that what they describe as ‘the missing discourse of desire’ for girls and the ‘alternative masculinities’ picture for boys needs to be covered.

Methods of Teaching Sex Education

In 1997 the BMA’s report School Sex Education (BMA, 1997) called for sex education to ‘become part of a total programme of personal social and health education’ and that all teachers in training should follow a compulsory module on sex education in order to raise standards of teaching. As most teachers delivering sex education have received little or no training in this controversial subject it is impossible to disagree with this, but at present there has been no direct action from the government and in many ways teacher education courses have become narrower not wider in recent years.

Tones (1993) describes the significant changes in the methodology of health education as being a decline in the formal, expert-directed approach, especially the talk or lecture and the rise of more informal, active methods of teaching such as participatory or experiential approaches. There has been a move away from the idea of the learner being an empty vessel to be filled with passed over knowledge and that rational argument will produce the desired response. The main reasons for this move appear to be ideological and theoretical. Tones describes the move away from authoritarianism to a more democratic approach accompanied by what he describes as demedicalisation. There is he says a desire to use teaching methods that focus on the learner, with an emphasis on the attitudes and perspectives learners bring into the learning situation. This has been accompanied with a decline in moral certitude.

Society has been gradually obliged to recognise the existence of
plurality of sometimes conflicting values, many of which have a bearing
on health. Tones (1993: 134)

Much discussion in health-related journals and articles now examines active methods of delivery as opposed to facts stated in a didactic manner. There is much interest in group work and writers advocate the use of discussion, demonstration and decision making skills. How these approaches sit with current OFSTED advice on whole class teaching with the focus on the teacher delivering material from the front is difficult to define, there appears to be some conflict of ideas. Tones points to the rise of interest in active methodologies in health education and cites the work of Freire in the 1970s. Freire’s approach is one of

‘critical consciousness-raising and empowerment’ Tones (1993). Freire’s work was mainly with community groups but health educators in the public and education spheres have adopted his advocated approach. It sat particularly well with the child centred approach so favoured in educational circles in the seventies and eighties.

Distinguishing methods of delivery from learning resources is important for those involved in delivering sex education. Many resources are available but some do little to advise the teacher on the most suitable methods of delivery. Over the years there has been enormous production of such resources for health education though many were directed towards the teacher rather than the learner. Resources however, are limited in their effect without the contribution and selection of a good teacher. For example a teacher can use a video to good effect within a learning situation as a trigger for group discussion whereas the video alone only informs. Many books ignore homosexuality, give the impressions albeit indirectly that the penis is superior to the clitoris and are coy as regards masturbation (Reiss, 1998b). Nowhere, however, does Reiss mention the lack of discussion of feelings attitudes and beliefs by the authors of these books, even whilst stating that most sex education in schools in this country occurs in the science laboratory.

The co-ordinators guide for the Schools Health Education Project 13 -18 (1980) includes a long list of possible methods for the teaching of health education. It is easy to distinguish group methods from one to one approaches, simulation and games but in most health education modules of delivery a variety of methods is used. Tones (1993) suggests that in any health education course the application of learning theory is important and that the teacher needs to understand the reason for the choice of one method over another. However, possibly the most important question is, do girls and boys prefer the same or different learning and teaching methods? This reflects the general ideas on learning and teaching discussed in the previous section.

Lenderyou and Ray (1997) describe the prospect of working with young men in this area as a ‘challenging’ one. Boys they believe give off an air of carefree invincibility, which can be daunting to teachers. These authors believe that boys are paying a high price to achieve ‘the acceptable face of masculinity’ (Lenderyou and Ray, 1997:47). The challenge to educators they believe is in breaking down the barriers that boys build between themselves and the examination of their feelings. Biddle and Forrest (1997) strongly advocate that, in writing sex education policies the particular needs of boys are taken into

account. Blake (1997), a Family Planning Association Project Officer, believes that establishing a safe environment where boys do not feel threatened or that they will lose face is extremely important. He also questions the use of single sex groups for discussions as the boys tend to self-censor when reporting back to mixed groups. Boys he thinks have more to lose when discussing sexual matters in that they are wary of teacher's attitudes to confidentiality and afraid of appearing less than men in the eyes of their peers. To this end he advocates that sometime discussion groups which avoid putting friends together can lead to useful exchanges of ideas, as they are less threatening.

Off site education in sexual matters often helps students to relax and respond in a way impossible to them in the confining atmosphere of school. Jackson and Plant (1997) describe a successful sexual health initiative in Lewisham and Southwark where students visited local clinics in order to improve their understanding of how to access the services provided by the local Health Authority. However, this approach is not always feasible with large numbers of students, so the use of outside agencies such as, the Brook Advisory Centre, the Family Planning Association or school nurses are often used to help teachers. They possess, in many cases, a better factual understanding of the area.

In recent years peer education has proved a popular approach to personal and social education areas of the curriculum. The Health Education Board for Scotland (1998) uses a definition of peer education by Sciacca who explains it as 'the teaching or sharing of health information, values and behaviours by members of similar age or status groups' (Sciacca, 1987 in Health Education Board for Scotland, 1998).

Peer educators build on the normal reactions of young people who tend to turn to those of their own age for help and advice more readily than to adults (Cullingford and Morrison, 1997). The IBIS Trust charity reports that peer education brings an increase in knowledge and understanding, growing skills and confidence but above all behaviour change in those who have taken part in peer education programmes (IBIS Trust, 1996). It is this behaviour change that is so desired by sex educators and the raw material, the educators themselves come cheap. There is however, the need to invest a considerable time and effort in training the peer educators in order for their efforts to reap maximum benefits (Health Education Board for Scotland, 1998). Peer Educators empathy and the ability to offer support are highly prized by the pupils. The programmes appear to have a further beneficial effect in that they provide a vehicle for the personal growth of the peer team, who learn the skills of

liaison, negotiation, organisation, planning and evaluation and as a result grow in self-confidence themselves (Harrin, 1997). Problems can occur where the peer educators are not themselves well informed of the topic they are discussing, but careful briefing and continuing tutor support can overcome most difficulties.

The revelation of personal experiences are warned against by many authors including the DfEE (2000) Guidelines, as this destroys the safe environment teachers wish to create. Epstein and Johnson (1998) believe that subjects such as love are very difficult for boys and that asking pupils for examples will have a negative effect. They also realise that teachers tend to call upon their own heterosexual relationships for examples, at once alienating those pupils with alternative sexualities. Most authors therefore advocate the use of case studies to remove the personal threatening element. Pattman (1997 in Epstein and Johnson, 1998) suggests the use of newspaper reports on particular items related to sex and relationships for debate in single sex classes. This is then followed by mixed sex discussion of the findings. Epstein and Johnson (1998) however, disagree believing that this approach can result in a dangerous situation, where boys again are blamed for causing problems in relationships.

At present sex education in schools is suffers from lack of clarity as regards the best approach, a worrying diversity between provision from school to school, confusion for the practitioners, influenced by a multitude of policies and guidance documents and lacking in any specific approaches to the varying needs of the different sexes.

This then is the research around gendered education and its implications for sex education. What we need is less theory and speculation and more evidence-based research, particularly from young people themselves and this is what this research intends to do. The issues on which we need answers are: -

- a) What is being taught in secondary schools today as regards sex and relationship education?
- b) Who teaches it and how are they trained?
 - What do those who teach it think of the present methods of delivery?
 - When and where is it and taught and for how long?
 - What methodologies are employed?
 - What alternative methodologies can be offered?

- What do young people, in particular boys think about the sex education they receive and what do they actually need?
- How do they think it could be improved so as to satisfy those needs?

Once answers to these questions are obtained it will be possible to evaluate whether gender specific education would be better than a co-educational approach and how sex education for boys should be undertaken.

Chapter 4 Methodology

The overall aims of the research were to review the effectiveness of sex education offered to boys and to recommend how that education could be improved. It was also considered to be important to assess what benefit boys might gain, in this area of the curriculum, from different approaches to those at present in general use in classrooms. The researcher had no specific beliefs or preconceptions as to what methods of delivery of sex education would best suit boy's needs, the research therefore being conducted as an open enquiry. The fieldwork undertaken had two main points of focus; firstly, to determine what is actually happening as regards sex education in English secondary schools and what methodologies are being employed; secondly, to profile a variety of these methodologies and alternative methods for delivery. Both these perspectives on sex education were then compared to and evaluated against criteria for effective sex education for boys which had been drawn from the literature search, from focus group interviews with boys and from the interviews with male sex education workers who work with boys.

Recognising Values and Controlling for Experience

The subject of sex education is an extremely sensitive one and not an area that can be described as 'value free'. Anderson with Arsenault (1998:32) define values as 'the intrinsic beliefs we hold as people, organisations, societies and cultures'. To attempt value free research in the area of sex education would be unrealistic. Any researcher, with experience of the research issue, brings personal values into the research. A belief that sex education is needed in schools today and that young people would benefit from better and more carefully planned and directed sex education are attitudes strongly held by the researcher. In a subject such as sex education it is also important to realise that the respondents' replies would also be strongly affected by their own values, as the subjects of the research would probably have deeply held opinions of how this area of the curriculum should be approached. These value systems come from personal beliefs built up over long periods of time, which impact on decisions made and the perspectives from which situations are approached. This in turn affects the way that knowledge is processed and reconstructed. It is important therefore that the values held by the researcher, the interviewees and the value laden contexts in which the research is carried out are made explicit. Anderson with Arsenault (1998:5) describes research that accepts values and the perspectives they bring as coming from a 'post positivism-paradigm'. He accepts that

what the researcher sees depends on the values they bring to the research and believes that so-called 'scientific' research in education is not as value free as its operatives claim, in that what is observed, as well as how it is observed, implies 'a set of values in the observer'. The area researched here may, by some, be perceived as highly controversial, in that opinions vary greatly as to whether sex education is the province of schools or not. Indeed successive governments have proved ambivalent on this issue, an attitude shown by the withdrawal clause in the 1993 Education Act and the stress placed on family life settings and moral values contexts for sex education (Green, 1996; Jones, 1999; DfEE 2000). What these particular morals are, to which culture or society they belong is not made clear and no definition has been made as to what constitutes a family in the eyes of the government. This therefore presents the researcher with the problem of using terminology which may be interpreted differently by researcher and researched. It was essential therefore to explain to all those involved the stance of the researcher, whilst demonstrating an open mind to the opinion of others and a willingness to listen to points of view different from that held by the researcher.

There are also many variables to consider (Denscombe, 1998), such as methods used to deliver sex education in individual schools and in the alternative methodologies researched, types of school, attitudes of teachers, school ethos and culture. An experimental approach to the subject was not practical because it was not possible to control the delivery of sex education in the wide variety of settings used. The approach that was adopted can be described as partially ethnographic, in that, at times it involved the immersion of the researcher in learning settings which were initially unfamiliar, though not totally new (Brown and Dowling, 1998) and evaluative, in that, at times, the researcher was outside the learning context. Brown and Dowling (1998) point to the challenge ethnographic research offers, in that researchers need when working in somewhat familiar settings to 'strip away our assumptions and everyday understandings to render the world around us as "anthropologically strange" (Brown and Dowling, 1998:43). It is essential with this type of research to make clear the reasons for choosing a particular setting and to be aware that,

... the more familiar a setting may seem, the greater the danger
of bringing your own unexamined interpretive frameworks in
making sense of what you see. Educational practitioners researching
educational practices are clearly vulnerable in this respect
Brown and Dowling (1998:44)

Quoting from research by da Silva in Brazilian classrooms which describes ‘two modes of pedagogic practice’ in schools, Brown and Dowling (1998) show that the descriptions of practice are strongly affected by the researcher’s preconceived perceptions of what is the best teaching approach to choose. In this research every effort was made by the researcher to avoid preconceptions as to what are the best methods to use when delivering sex education to boys, by devolving the criteria against which to assess methods used from literature and boys themselves. A neutral stance was taken when observing and interviewing participants, leading questions were avoided and boys themselves asked to give their opinions on what and how they wanted to be taught. The schools’ practices and the alternative methodologies were compared to the boys’ expressed wishes and to guidance from the literature search.

Configuring a Research Strategy

In order to address the issues raised by the research aims a strategy was established to enquire into each area of concern. The many faceted nature of the data sources and issues generic to a broadly evaluation-based strategy (See Table 1).

Table 1 The Research Strategy

<u>Issue</u>	<u>Action Taken</u>
Effectiveness of sex education in schools	Pupils had to be questioned
Assessing the generality of the problem	A range of schools needed to be looked at in depth. Four very different schools were used for case studies
The question of the representative nature of the schools used needed to be addressed	Information from four case study schools was compared to a further group of schools and students at university whose experience of schooling was very varied were questioned
The opinions of those involved in teaching sex education in schools had to be sought	PSHE co-ordinators in schools were interviewed
Attitudes and needs of pupils had to be ascertained	Questionnaires and focus groups were used to gather information
Criteria had to be established for judging	The results of questionnaires,

sex education methodologies

focus group interviews. qualitative data from questionnaires, and from literature were used to establish criteria against which to measure the methods researched

Alternative methodologies needed to be assessed

In depth interviews and observations were used as appropriate

The Research Design in Outline

This consisted firstly of the choice of four case study schools, where sixth formers completed questionnaires and PSHE co-ordinators were interviewed. This was followed by the use of a further five schools for the purpose of benchmarking, where a selection of sixth formers completed questionnaires and PSHE co-ordinators were interviewed. A selection of university undergraduates on three different courses was given questionnaires to complete on their school sex education experiences. This gave insight into what is happening in schools at present as regards sex education delivery. Focus groups of boys from three of the case study schools were established and group interviews conducted in order to discover what boys want from sex education lessons. Alternative methodologies were researched by variety of methods, such as interview, observation and the use of a focus group. A set of criteria was then established from reading, focus group and questionnaire responses against which to measure the effectiveness of sex education in schools and the alternative methods in respect of their ability to fulfil boys' needs.

Assessment of the Effectiveness of Sex Education in Secondary Schools Today

The issue of the effectiveness of sex education in schools today was assessed using a case study approach in a limited number of schools. This involved questioning sixth form students on their memories and opinions of the sex education they had been given whilst at secondary school and how it could have been improved. In the first instance questionnaires were used with lower sixth form students. To further research the particular attitudes and feelings of boys in this area focus group interviews with boys were carried out in three schools. Teachers responsible for the co-ordination of the delivery of sex education within each school were interviewed in depth, using a semi-structured interview technique (Cohen and Manion 1994). This was to ascertain what programmes of sex education were being offered and to obtain an evaluation of these programmes by the staff involved in their organisation and delivery. (A fuller discussion of these approaches

follows later in this section.) These co-ordinators are the members of staff responsible for the delivery of sex education, outside the science curriculum, and they are the decision makers as regards methodologies employed, though other constraints such as timetabling and provision of resources are generally controlled by others. The responses would without doubt be affected by the personal bias of the teachers and the values and beliefs they held, as they were being asked to criticise their own work and planning. However, this information was essential in order to ascertain how satisfied staff were with the sex education offered to pupils in their school. Cohen and Manion (1994:228) cite the work of Menzel (1978) asking how much importance should be given to participants' interpretation of the events they describe. These authors interpret Menzel's suggestions as the researcher having to 'make choices and take responsibility for the assignments of meanings of acts' and that to discard personal interpretations by participants would result in the loss of highly useful data. However, these authors also warn that when explaining actions it is possible to delineate the interpretations made by those concerned, but that those interpretations need not produce the final meanings of the actions for the researcher. As the purpose of the research was to focus on the needs of boys, particular stress was laid on questions pertinent to this concern, including methodologies used, content, sex of the teacher, time allowance and when taught.

Sixth formers were chosen as this meant that parental permission did not have to be sought. If younger students had been used, because of parental right of withdrawal, it would have been necessary to ask the permission of parents. Schools may well have been unwilling to allow this and it would have added greatly to problems of administration if only a limited number of selected parents had given permission. How true a picture could be gained with a possibly distorted sample also needed to be considered. Furthermore, sex education takes place at different times in different schools and over several year groups, so it would have been difficult to get an overall picture by choosing one particular year group and excluding others. The danger of surveying the views of younger children is that it could lead to bias and completely distort results. Working across age groups would also have added at least two more variables, pupil maturity and the effect of curricular interventions. Sixth formers having completed their statutory education were a preferable group, as they can reflect with the benefit of time and in the context of their present needs, even though it must be realised that many students do not progress to sixth form studies and bias could result from the samples being taken only from students who wished to continue their education in school. In order to overcome this problem it was decided to

also approach students entering a university on a variety of courses. Many of these students come into the university by routes other than the traditional Advanced Level, some having been working, and some coming from Further Education routes such as Access courses. These students used were 25 years of age or younger so that their experiences could be related to what has been happening in schools. after the guidance of Curriculum Document 5/94 (DfE, 1994)

There are problems with asking respondents of questionnaires to recall information, memories are not always accurate (Cohen at al., 2000) and respondents could confuse information gained from school with that learned from elsewhere some time ago, or from primary school. However, this was a smaller drawback than gaining incomplete information from students who were half way through a programme.

Selection of Schools

It was essential that as wide a variety of schools as possible was approached in order to get a clear picture of what is happening in English schools today. The schools chosen represented social diversity in that they ranged from a public fee paying boarding school (C) to one where over fifty percent of the pupils receive free school meals (B). All the schools used for case studies were in the Greater London area. This geographical limit was set in recognition of resources limitations. These schools may not reflect a true picture of what is happening throughout the country, because the sample is confined to a particular geographical area. There are however researchers who would claim that this point is not particularly important, Patton for example (1990 cited in Anderson with Arsenault, 1998) suggests that ‘there are no rules for sample size in qualitative enquiry’ and Anderson further suggests that ‘the field is where the problem exists’. However, if the spread of the sample schools does not produce significant differences in the assessment of benefit then there may have basis for claiming that the results are indeed representative of a wider geographical area. Sex education exists in the majority of schools in this country. Outside National Curriculum Science however, the non-statutory provision on relationships and attitudes varies considerably from school to school and it was essential to obtain as wide a sample as possible of alternative schooling systems. Wellings at al. (1995:417-420) used 1,8876 randomly selected (by postcode) respondents to explore ‘the relation between receipt of sex education and experience of first intercourse’ in order to produce a generalisable result. This approach was rejected for this study both on practical grounds (the scale of the project) and because the strategy fails to engage in any depth with the

curriculum and teaching and learning contexts. A random sample used to represent a range of intervention strategies would have to have been enormous, as some strategies are more common than others and there is a wide variety in use. This led inevitably to a case study strategy, to allow for this diversity whilst avoiding wastage of resources.

The large number of variables which had to be considered, such as school type (Grant Maintained Locally Managed [now foundation/community] Private/Voluntary Aided), ethnic mix of students, socio-economic background of the students, single sex or coeducational, meant that the schools had to be carefully chosen to be representative of the diversity of secondary education provision. The criteria that were used in identifying the case studies were intended to provide in the sample schools, a variety of socio-economic environments, single sex boys and co-educational schools, (girls schools were not considered because this study focussed on boys), differing cultural mixes and a variety of funding sources. In order to obtain schools, which met the criteria, advisors in LEAs were approached for help. Enquiries were also made to other schools and of teachers and students (a snowball method), in order to identify likely case study schools (Denscombe, 1998).

Initially phone calls were made to the teacher responsible for the sixth form to explain the research and to ask permission to proceed. These co-ordinators offered, in all cases, to obtain permission to proceed from the headteacher and, following this, a sample of the questionnaire was sent to the school for approval. In one school the headteacher refused permission for the research giving no reasons for so doing, but the sixth form head said that maybe she 'considered it too time consuming'. As the questionnaire took only some ten minutes to fill in and this was to be done in general studies time the response seems strange. One could speculate that in the present day competitive market this school, a very successful GM (foundation), highly oversubscribed school was reluctant to be found wanting in any area of the curriculum. In all cases schools and teachers were assured that confidentiality would be observed. Brown and Dowling (1998) point to the ethical considerations that must be addressed when dealing with sensitive information. Sex education is a highly controversial area, teachers being understandably wary of disclosing information that might portray the school in a poor light to outsiders. Anderson with Arsenault (1998) further point to the need to respect the time of the respondent and in schools, where both pupil and teacher time is pressured by the external forces of public examinations and inspections, this is particularly true. Care was therefore taken to fit into

normal school timetables and to request interviews at times suitable to the interviewee rather than the researcher.

For the initial case studies four diverse schools were used. (Fig.ii)

SCHOOL A

School A is a GM (foundation) co-educational comprehensive school in an outer London borough. It is situated in an area of fairly expensive housing, though students come from a wide catchment area. There are approximately 1800 pupils and a sixth form of 450. The school is successful as far as league table position and external examination results are concerned and is over subscribed. There is an ethnic mix within the school, though this is mainly white students with a high predominance of Cypriots. The sixth form is a large one with some students coming into the school at year 12. In order to produce a true picture of the school, pupils who had joined in the sixth form were excluded. Students enter the school aged 11. This school is involved in the CHIPS (Childline in Partnership with Schools) scheme, a peer support programme, which helps pupils with worries about relationships, bullying and examinations. The scheme is not part of the PSHE programme being run by a sixth form teacher who trains the peer volunteers and debriefs them (Willis, 1999). PSHE has a fairly high profile in the school and the co-ordinator sits on several consultative bodies which supply suggestions for action to government.

SCHOOL B

School B is a GM (foundation) co-educational school in an inner London borough. There is a high ethnic mix with a large number of refugees, Turkish Kurds, Somalies, Bosnians and children from Turkish, Greek, Afro-Caribbean and Asian backgrounds. The school does not perform well in the league tables, has an attendance problem, was criticised by OFSTED for poor performance and behaviour standards, is on a split site and is not particularly popular with local parents. No students in this school had come directly into the sixth form. All students questioned had entered the school aged 11. The rising population of refugees in the area has resulted in a gradual expansion of the intake from 180 in the present year 11 to a projected 300 in the coming year 7. The sixth form at present numbers only 65 pupils. Shortly after the research visits were made (2001) the school was put under special measures by OFSTED.

SCHOOL C

School C is a private fee paying boys boarding (HMC) school, in the London area, with a large proportion of students coming from very affluent and privileged backgrounds, including some overseas students. This school is popular for its social standing as well as for the education it provides. Many of the students of this school proceed to Oxbridge. Students enter the school following the Common Entrance Examination at age 13 or possibly 14 for those kept back for an academic year in prep school. Only students who had been at the school from the 'Shell' year (first year) were used. The school is run on a house-based system and originally housemasters had been responsible for 'health education'. For the last ten years, however, a school wide system has been implemented in order to rationalise provision. The school runs on a house-based system, with seventy to eighty boys to a house and varying numbers of a year group in each of the houses. The majority of pupils stay on to the sixth form and other boys are admitted at this stage making the total of sixth formers over three hundred. Only boys who had been at the school from the Shell year were involved in the research.

SCHOOL D

School D is a LM (community) boys' only grammar school in an outer London borough. At this school A Level and GNVQ students were available for research though the GNVQ cohort is small in comparison with the AL group of students. The school, despite its title is not selective, has fairly good standing in league tables but had previously received a damning report on PSHE and sex education provision from an OFSTED inspection and was working hard to improve the courses offered. Boys enter the school aged 11. Only boys who had been in this school from year 7 were used in the research. There are about 1100 boys in the school with a sixth form of about 225

Benchmarking

(See Figure ii) In order to ascertain if the information gained from these case study schools was generalisable, further similar schools, from a wider catchment area of the country were approached. They were asked to allow completion of a limited number of questionnaires by students and that teachers, responsible for sex education, describe provision in their school thorough a telephone or personal interview. Schools from Northamptonshire (School E), Hertfordshire (School F), the London Boroughs of Newham (School G), and Barnet (School H) and Nottinghamshire (School I) were used. One of these schools was a Church of England public boys' boarding (HMC) school

Figure ii MAIN FEATURES OF SCHOOLS SURVEYED

Schools used	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	TOTAL
Mixed	*	*			*		*	*	*	6
Single sex			*	*		*				3
State	*	*		*	*		*	*	*	7
Private/public			*			*				2
Boarding			*							1
Day/boarding						*				1
Inner London Borough		*					*			2
Outer London Borough	*		*	*				*		4
School in south east/Midlands					*	*			*	3
Low soc/econ community		*					*		*	3
Middle soc/econ community	*			*	*			*		4
High soc/econ community			*			*				2
Mainly white English			*		*	*			*	4
Some ethnic group students	*			*				*		3
High ethnic group/immigrants		*					*			2
Good academic performance	*		*							2
Middling academic performance				*	*	*		*	*	5
Low academic performance		*					*			2
Large class sizes	*	*		*	*		*	*	*	7
Small class sizes			*			*				2
TOTALS of features	7	7	8	7	7	8	7	7	7	

The sample taken was selected at random from participants at a national conference on a PSHE topic and from a selection of schools in the London area. Volunteers were requested to participate in the research and three heads of PSHE departments offered help. These schools were from the middle and south of England and were all state schools. A further public boys' school was also approached in order to see if the results from School C could be replicated and an inner London school was approached to add balance. Letters of request were dispatched to each school with a sample questionnaire and when permission was granted twenty plus questionnaires were sent to each school with a short list of questions for the head of PSHE replicating the questions asked at interview in the four case study schools. Problems with postal research strategies are common (Bell 1999). Davis et al. (1997) in an article entitled '*Attitudes to sex education among secondary school governors*' highlight the difficulty of response rates from postal questionnaires. Of the random sample (n=627) governors sent questionnaires only 51% (n=319) responded to the first request and as a result of a subsequent appeal the response rate was raised to 67% (n=405). In order to obtain as high a response rate as possible in this research personal contact was made with the teachers who had volunteered to assist in order to encourage a full response. Reminder phone calls were used to encourage completion of the research. To facilitate the co-ordinators in schools E, F, G and H the researcher visited the schools to conduct interviews with them. School I's co-ordinator agreed to a short telephone interview to follow up information given to the researcher at a PSHE training day.

Methods used to Obtain Information on Sex Education Teaching in Schools

The methods used to obtain information from pupils, students and teachers included questionnaires, interviews and focus groups as detailed below. The questions used were generated from the issues raised at the end of chapter 3 and based on considerations of gender specific sex education.

The Questionnaires

a) Schools

This is a sensitive area to research and as such care has to be taken with the young people involved. Rosenthal and Peart (1996) discuss the difficulty that teenagers have in negotiating sexual encounters. They make a distinction between girls' and boys' understanding of the messages that their partners attempt to give them regarding sexual behaviours. To attempt to discover what messages were given about sexual encounters a questionnaire was used to ensure anonymity of response to questions which could have been seen by the young people as embarrassing. The young people questioned may have

found discussing such intimate subjects difficult, especially in front of an adult stranger, but the questionnaire technique allows for anonymity and may therefore elicit a more open response. Breakwell and Millward (1997) echo this need for sensitivity when asking questions of young people in regard to such a difficult subject. In their research into sexual self-concept and risk taking their hypothesis expected to find a difference between attitudes of males and females and an anonymous questionnaire was used to collect data. 16-19 year olds were used in this research and contacted by letter to request their co-operation. Only students who replied to this initial request were sent copies of the questionnaire. One must question therefore the sample used here, based on one suburban geographical area of a Local Authority and producing a response rate of 31.4%, after a second attempt at contact was made with non responders. The authors believed this to be an acceptable figure, given the sensitivity of the subject and young people's reluctance to reveal personal feelings. However, the authors do acknowledge that there is a problem in generalising results from such a response rate. Breakwell and Millard (1997) believed that any further attempts to elicit a response could be interpreted as harassment so tried no further. It was important therefore to remember the sensitivity of the subject matter of this current research and that achieving a high return rate quickly though essential could be difficult. To avoid low response rates questionnaires were completed in class under the supervision of the researcher or of teachers. The method used in this research for gaining questionnaire responses led to a near 100% response rate from a much wider geographical area that that used by Breakwell and Millard (1997).

A pilot questionnaire for use with lower sixth form pupils was devised and ten students from a local school, not used in the main research, were asked to complete it and to comment on the questionnaire layout and design and the types of questions asked. Piloting was essential to discover any anomalies, lack of clarity in questions or repetition (Cohen and Manion, 1994) and also to discover if these personal questions were acceptable to the young people. The questionnaire was designed with late teenagers in mind. Care was taken to use accessible language (Bell, 1999) and to limit the time needed to complete the questionnaire to ten minutes as a maximum in order to prevent loss of concentration (Anderson with Arsenault, 1998). A mixture of quantitative and qualitative responses with a bias to the quantitative was requested, with most questions merely requiring ticks for the answers.

The first two questions asked for the age and gender of the students, Bell (1999) advising that such an approach would appear non-threatening. The gender question would allow for analysis of girls' and boys' responses. Following questions asked in which school lessons sex education was taught, by whom, and in what school years. There then followed questions asking students to evaluate the sex lessons they had received. These included questions on the content of lessons, response of students, if students had been given chance to discuss areas in sexual relationships that the literature search had showed were being neglected, how lessons were conducted, that is, methods used and if genders were separated or kept together. The respondents were then asked their preferences with regard to sex education teaching. If they wanted same sex teachers, and to rank their preferences from a list of desired teacher qualities. Finally respondents were asked to suggest how sex education in their school could have been improved.

The pilot responses were then examined and the respondents questioned on the layout and design of the questionnaire and whether the respondents found the questions intrusive, embarrassing or difficult to answer. A few problems were highlighted. The respondents all believed that two of the questions were somewhat similar in their requests, so one of these was removed. For the questions relating to the chance to discuss sexual relationships, it was suggested that an alternative response of 'none of the above' should be added to two questions and this was done. One respondent appeared to have misunderstood the ranking question answering all sections with 1 rather than using the 1-6 ranking requested. In discussion with her afterwards, it appeared that she thought all the suggestions regarding the type of teacher she would prefer to teach sex education were equally important and so had given them all 1. All other respondents answered this question correctly.

The questionnaires were then altered (Appendix 1) and used in the first case study school. The head of sixth form and form tutors administered them during general studies lessons. This was achieved by personal contact between the researcher and the member of staff. Douglas et al. (1999) in a study of bullying in schools used a postal technique for the delivery of questionnaires to random schools. This resulted in a response rate of only 30.7% and in this study in order to achieve a good rate of response personal delivery, collection and organisation of questionnaires was seen as vital. It achieved its aims as in all cases 100% response rates were received from pupils present on the day of the questionnaire distribution. There were a few absences but this did little to affect the final results. In order to explain the research and to request the co-operation of tutors a letter for

each tutor was included with the separate class packs of questionnaires delivered to the school (Appendix 2). The head of sixth form agreed to brief the form tutors on the nature of the research. His comment was that the form tutors would be glad to have 'something given to them to do with their pupils'. The general studies lessons took place over one week in the summer term and the researcher collected the completed questionnaires. This approach ensured that as far as possible response rates were high. In many uses of questionnaire technique this is not the general case (Cohen and Manion, 1994). Research carried out by Mellanby et al. (1995) in order to develop and teach a school sex education programme leading to a decrease in sexual activity, also used the questionnaire method and included the use of control schools and one 'novel' sex education programme.

Questionnaires were administered under what they describe as 'examination conditions' by trained medical staff. It was not possible to emulate this strict control in this research and it does appear somewhat draconian to subject students to such conditions in order to ensure completion of questionnaires without recourse to discussion.

Following the research completion in the first school the three other case study schools were approached and sample questionnaires discussed with the appropriate member of staff. To make the questionnaires suitable for the individual schools some adjustments had to be made. In the two boys' only schools used, the questions regarding a) girl's behaviour in the classroom and b) if sexes had been divided for all or some of the teaching had to be removed from the list of questions. They were substituted by a question asking if the inclusion of girls would have been acceptable. For the public school special terminology was inserted for form names and the health programme running in the school. These, however, were minor adjustments and introduced in order to aid understanding in context. In one school the researcher was invited in to meet all the lower sixth during a general studies period and to explain and administer the questionnaires in person. This was in fact the most ideal way for questionnaires to be administered as the researcher had total control of the proceedings (Robson, 1993). Students responded well and despite some fears from the staff that the nature of the questions would give a possible excuse for silly behaviour, the young people were sensible, concerned and keen to co-operate.

The somewhat sensitive nature of the material also raised problems in the public school in that concern was expressed that the researcher might be an undercover 'bimbo journalist' from the Sun newspaper trying to discover 'naughty goings on at public schools'. The school in question had been previously caught by such a trap and was very wary of the

researcher's intentions. A letter of verification to prove the bonafide credentials of the researcher was provided and this appeared to allay fears to some extent. The questionnaires were distributed by the health education team co-leader, to the group health leaders to whom she explained the nature of the research. They were then given to groups of boys during the discussion sessions following main lecture inputs.

For benchmarking purposes a small number of questionnaires (20-25) was then issued to Schools E-I. The only problem that occurred with questionnaire return was with School I in Nottinghamshire. The PSHE co-ordinator had offered to take part and questionnaires and letters had been sent to the school as agreed. Despite repeated telephone calls, the questionnaires were never returned; the co-ordinator constantly saying that he was 'getting to it' but producing no result.

b) University Students

In order to add depth to the research 3 groups of 20 undergraduate first year university students from 2 university campuses were asked to complete questionnaires. These were of a similar nature to those used with school pupils but slightly altered to include type of secondary attended, to allow comparison with the sample schools, and ethnic background. The questionnaires were piloted to a group of 8 second year students, who were asked to comment on the layout, questions asked and requested to point out anomalies. No problems were found with the questionnaire. Only students who had received all their secondary education in an English school and were 25 or under were used. Students who were pursuing a computer studies degree were randomly selected during enrolment and asked to fill in the questionnaire whilst waiting to register. A group of 20 performing arts students were asked to complete the questions and then a similar group of education students. Computer studies students in the university are predominantly male and so a ratio of 18 males to 4 females was chosen, as this was similar to the student intake. High ratios of female to male students in performing arts and more so in the education studies group was taken into account when the random samples of students were taken. In all cases the researcher asked if the students would be willing to co-operate with the research, briefly explained the content of the questionnaire. Only one person approached declined to co-operate and in all case questionnaires were completed and returned immediately to the waiting researcher thus ensuring a 100% response rate.

The Interviews

In each case study school in-depth interviews were conducted with the person responsible for sex education in the school. In all cases sex education was delivered in science, but the members of staff questioned were those responsible for personal and social education, health education or religious education as they could give a more overarching view of provision. These interviews were essential in order to gather in depth information on the techniques that were being used in schools at present. A semi-structured interview technique (Cohen et al., 2000) was used to allow for individual opinions and the differences between schools. A general set of questions was designed, based on the issue of gendered sex education (Appendix 3).. Information on the school itself, how sex education is organised, the personnel involved including questions on gender and staff training, the methods of delivery with particular emphasis on relationships education, the concerns of the co-ordinator as to the status of the subject and the school's approach and ways in which the co-ordinator thought delivery could be improved were included. In mixed schools questions were also asked to determine if genders were separated at any time for sex education and in boys' only schools if at any time they had attempted to bring girls into the groups.

Interviews were conducted in three schools and at the home of one respondent, at a time convenient to the interviewees in order to prevent interruptions. These were busy people who had in all cases other areas of teaching to consider, ranging for example from physical education to English. In each case of a school-based approach interviews were held in the office of the respondent and all the interviews were, with the permission of the interviewee, taped for later transcription. Bell (1999) points to the problems with taping interviews as the time required for analysis and transcription is considerable but the alternative of taking notes whilst the interviewees were talking would have proved impossible and spoiled the result. Brown and Dowling (1998) stress the importance of transcribing taped interviews oneself, not relying on secretarial support, in order to obtain a true record. Notes were also made on facial expressions and pauses for laughter, to add to the depth of information obtained from the transcripts.

Bias, as Bell (1999) points out, is difficult for the interviewer to avoid. Certainly for an interviewer with a keen interest in the subject area under discussion this must be borne in mind. As this was a feature in this research, particularly with regard to methods of delivering sex education and attitudes to boys' needs, it was decided that the interviewer

should make as few comments on the material offered as possible, merely encouraging the respondents to talk about their experiences. Questions were used as the means of bringing interviewees back to the point. Most showed an almost embarrassing willingness to talk and appeared to enjoy the experience of having what they appeared to regard as a sympathetic listener. In all cases information such as school curriculum plans were provided for the researcher's benefit. The interviews took from one to one and a half-hours to complete.

After the completion of the case study schools' interviews it was decided to also interview respondents from the benchmarking school. Schools E, F, G and H were visited and School I's co-ordinator agreed to a short telephone interview.

Focus Groups

Following the questionnaires and interviews, focus groups were established in three of the schools. Sixth form boys, who had completed the questionnaires, were asked to volunteer to join a focus discussion group. Times were arranged and a suitable venue found where the interviews would be undisturbed. In the second school the venue provided was the room used for detentions and the researcher noting the boys' initial unease had to attempt to relax the group before beginning. Refreshments provided by the school 'as a treat' helped to lighten the atmosphere so the interview could proceed in a relaxed manner.

Morgan (1988:12) states that the hallmark of a focus group is 'the explicit use of the group's interaction to produce data and insights that would be less accessible without the interaction found in the group'. In order to ascertain the feelings of boys regarding their sexual education it was necessary to collect qualitative data. Thomas (1996:91) in her research on 'Teenage sexual health promotion' advocates using focus groups as 'this research method is particularly valuable in the search for adolescent opinion about sex as it was likely to be a potentially embarrassing subject to discuss'. Anderson with Arsenault (1998:203) state that 'group composition is fundamental to good focus group technique' and that the groups must have 'some common characteristics related to what is being focussed upon'. All these boys had undergone sex education in the school they attended though in one school only in Science and Religious Studies lessons, and had completed the questionnaire. They did, however, know each other well, something that Anderson with Arsenault (1998) dislike, as it may, in their opinion, inhibit discussion and not allow members of the group to benefit fully. In this particular scenario the choice of subjects familiar to each other was unavoidable and appeared to add to the groups' responses, as

they had a shared history to discuss and recall. This familiarity also appeared valuable when dealing with boys of sixteen to seventeen years who were being asked to discuss a fairly intimate topic with a stranger. No scribe was used as it was considered the presence of another adult would inhibit the boys' talk. Thomas (1996) in her research with adolescents points to findings by R and G. Goldman in 1982 which showed that children perceive that adults have problems with discussing sexual matters with them and that adult embarrassment creates a problem with children's reactions. Thomas particularly points to problems with male teachers, who appear to find the subject more difficult than do female teachers. The focus groups were prompted with general questions about their experiences of sex education and their preferences for different methodologies, teachers, content and approach (Appendix 4). The groups were taped and the interviews later transcribed by the researcher. After an uneasy beginning, when one boy, after being asked why he was not contributing replied 'I don't know what's the right thing to say' assurances were given to participants that all responses were right and that the researcher had come to learn from them, there were no further problems. The groups discussed the subject in detail, sensibly and with great maturity considering their chronological age. There were disagreements between participants over preferred methods or the ways in which sex education should be approached but a wealth of material was gained. One group insisted on carrying on the discussion through breaktime and only stopped when the bell called them into another lesson. A final question from one participant was to ascertain if the material collected was to be used to influence government policy as he thought it 'definitely should be'.

Hillier et al. (1998) describing research in Australia on adolescents' attitudes towards safe sex strategies used focus group discussions of a similar nature to those employed in this research. Sessions were with six to eight 'senior students', single sex groups were used and lasted for approximately an hour and a semi-structured theme list was used as a guide for the discussions. However, in the Australian research it was decided to employ a same-sex facilitator. This was not possible in the focus groups used here. This sex difference could possibly affect the responses of students. Certainly Hillier et al (1998) believed this to be important factor but in this research, the use of a female with male groups did not appear to inhibit discussion and may even have facilitated it, as no same sex rivalry was present. Content and theme analysis was used to sort the findings and identify broad categories for discussion. These were based upon the original semi-structured themes list used as the discussion guide.

Research into Alternative Methodologies

Cullingford and Morrison (1997:65), in their research into peer group pressure, suggest that qualitative methods are essential. 'They offer the required degree of sensitivity and flexibility essential to the investigation of social process and the generation of attitudes'. These authors stress the rich data which can be obtained from employing qualitative methods when working with young people but also stress the necessity when generalising from particular specific comments made that every effort must be made to validate those conclusions. They too stress that 'clusters of differences or/and consistencies' may appear from the analysis and advise that any consistencies discovered should be double checked. The researcher noted this advice.

A variety of alternative methods which may be used in delivering sex education to teenagers was explored using qualitative methods. These included: -

- student tutoring where university students trained in this area go into schools to work with children.
- peer education and the use of outside trained staff coming into a school to work with students
- agony chat lines on the Internet.
- a theatre group.
- youth work teams working in schools.
- trained health workers who specialise in working with boys and young men.
- approaches used by teachers and teacher educators in the Netherlands.

As these alternative methods varied greatly it was necessary to use different methodological approaches in order to gain the requisite information. No particular structure or schedule was possible, as the provision was so individual and diverse. The main method used was the semi structured interview but observations and focus groups using involved workers were also employed.

Student tutoring

The research on this method used for delivering sex education was undertaken in Prague as it is a particular initiative being undertaken by one tutor and a group of students based at university there. At present there appears to be no such methodology being employed in sex and relationships education here in England, though Imperial College in London has

long been involved with student tutoring in science and the idea is the original invention of Sinclair Goodlad based at Imperial. Though there is a difference in culture between England and the Czech Republic, the method as seen by the researcher could without difficulty be transferred into English schools. Students of psychology are trained by university staff in sex and relationships education from a programme prepared at the university. The Czech education system places far greater stress on psychology than does the one practised at present in England and teachers specialising in health education are trained to go into Czech schools with enthusiastic support from the government. There does appear to be less perception of boys as a problem in classrooms in the Czech Republic. At present education appears to be seen as a means of escape from drudgery and the constraint of poorly paid jobs, so responses to education appear are more positive than in many English schools.

Research was conducted by

- a focus group interview with student tutors
- interviews with
 - a) the academic involved in the planning of the initiative.
 - b) a student involved in the tutoring and some of the children at the school in which she was working. A visit was made to the school to see the activities of the student tutor and examine records and photographs of the lessons in sex education taken by her.
 - c) an Education Minister in the government, the Head of Health Education in the Faculty of Education at the university and an educational psychologist working with families and children in Prague.

The majority of these interviews were taped and transcribed but the research in school was by note taking, as taping would have been inappropriate. The university tutor responsible for the programme arranged all the visits and in all cases clearance was given to the researcher who received a warm welcome from all parties. The interviews and focus groups were conducted in English as all the students and tutors had a good command of the English language and were keen to practise. The school visit required that the student tutor translate responses from the children, though in some cases the children themselves attempted to speak to the researcher in English. The focus group of student tutors was conducted at the university, whilst all other interviews were conducted in the various offices of the respondents in Prague.

Focus group with student tutors

This was undertaken at the university and eight student tutors working in a variety of schools attended and discussed the scheme.

Interviews

a) Interview with the University Tutor.

This took the form of a semi-structured interview and covered areas such as the organisation and position of sex education in Czech Republic schools, the curriculum, training the students, her philosophy regarding sex and relationships education, the ways in which the students are trained to teach sex education in the classroom and her opinions on the needs of boys in this area of the curriculum.

b) Interview with a Student Tutor and the Classroom Visit.

The interview took place at lunchtime in the school which caters for children for six to fifteen and also runs an afternoon club for the children of 'workers'. There then followed informal discussions with some of the pupils. The student tutor was working in the school for a year, teaching family and relationships education and acting as 'a godmother' to the pupils, in essence fulfilling the role of counsellor. She was questioned about her role, how she had been trained, her work with the children and how the teaching staff had received her. Questions were asked as to her approaches to the different sexes and if she had split sex groups or if she had opinions on whether such a practise would be desirable. The methods she used in the classroom were also discussed as these appeared in her opinion to be using a different approach to that used in most classrooms in the Czech Republic schools.

c) Interviews with the Education Minister the Head of Health Education in the Faculty of Education at the University and an Educational Psychologist.

These were semi-structured interviews used to discover the attitude to sex education in the Czech Republic and gain a cultural perspective of Czech schools and family life there and government opinions towards health education in general. Each took place in the office of the interviewee. In the case of the Head of Health Education the interview was aided by the use of an interpreter who was fluent in English, German and Czech and helped the respondent reply fully to the questions. Interviews were taped with the permission of the respondents and later transcribed.

Peer Education

This part of the research was conducted in the West Country where an initiative involving the delivery of sex education through the use of trained outside personnel and peer educators from within the schools is being attempted. Interviews were conducted with university and health service staff running the programme and observations were made in two schools. One lesson on contraception for a Year 10 group was taken by the trained outside staff team and the other a culmination of work on withstanding peer pressure and negotiating sexual relationships with partners by sixth form pupils from the school with a Year 9 class of pupils. Course material was examined and evaluations of the project by a series of young people inspected.

In this case sixth form students, as opposed to same age students (Year 9), as suggested by Scicca (in Health Education Board for Scotland 1998 as his definition of peers), were used for the peer-led work. These students were volunteers who had been trained by committed staff, as suggested by Miller and MacGilchrist (1996), and by the Health Education Board for Scotland (1998). On their web site they describe peer interactions as being usually 'more frequent, intense and diverse than those with other people' and that young people using this method learn to 'share, help comfort and empathise with others as well as learning critical social skills...'. Elizabeth Harrin (1997), in her description of peer work on sexual health, safe sex and substance abuse education which she undertook whilst at sixth form college, describes one of the benefits for the peer educator as personal development, gains in confidence and a possible change in career goals. She does however, point to problems with this as a method in that without considerable support the peer educators may suffer personal problems and difficulties when being perceived by friends as a source of information and to some extent a counsellor, which sets them apart. It was necessary therefore to obtain information from the team running the project in the West Country on how the peer educators were trained and supported. This was addressed in the interview with the University-based project leader.

The Agony Uncle Chat on the Internet

This involves the use of a chat line run by one of the main Internet service providers. The 'agony uncle' who has experience of a similar role with girls' magazines runs a chat show during which boys and girls are encouraged to ask questions about relationships and sexual behaviour. The agony uncle was interviewed by the researcher in his own home after a telephoned request for an interview. No 'clients' of the show could be interviewed as they

are anonymous and records of the show are not kept. Material used to provide information backup was examined. The agony uncle did not wish to be observed whilst 'on line' as the job is very pressurised and any distraction can, in his opinion, affect his performance. He always works alone apart from an MC based in Glasgow, who fields the questions from the young people.

Theatre Group

A theatre in education group that offer plays about sexual topics which are directly aimed at teenagers was observed giving a performance and the subsequent discussion was listened to by the researcher. The group was a year 11 group from an inner London community comprehensive school. The play offered on this occasion was particularly focussed towards boys and the effects of peer pressure on sexual behaviour and interaction with friends. The number of students observing the play was about fifty and the play was delivered 'in the round' in the school hall by four actors. An interview with the director was carried out to discuss his opinions of the reactions of the young people to the group's work and the teacher responsible for booking the group was asked opinions on the use of theatre in sex education teaching

Youth work Teenage Health Initiative

This is a small-scale initiative run by a very small team of trained youth workers in an inner London borough as part of a community scheme. There are 2 full time workers and some part timers and students on placement. The project works with 13-19 year olds students in the borough and attempts to provide an innovative response to the health needs of these young people. The core objectives of the team are to increase awareness of young people of their own health needs, to establish a primary health service function within 3 local young people's groups and to facilitate and support peer education on health related subjects. The project aims to target specifically young people at risk, young parents, and young people from minority ethnic backgrounds, those with special educational needs and refugees.

Observation was the method of research employed here; both participant and non-participant techniques were used with a bias towards the latter (Robson, 1993). They were unstructured in nature as the researcher was unable to visit the schools in advance and plan what was to be done. The recording of data therefore was by use of notes and narrative. Wragg (1994:51) in his classifications of classroom observations stresses that the qualitative observer need not be 'a central part of the school', though some may be

‘enmeshed in classroom life’ others ‘like to keep their distance’. Wragg (1994) further prompts the observer to explain clearly to the subject of the observation the purpose of that observation and the need for the observers themselves to consider their own views and biases towards what is being observed. The researcher therefore explained to the youth workers involved the nature of the research being undertaken, namely the exploration of a variety of methodologies used in sex education delivery and their effect on boys. In the case of the usage of ‘baby’ dolls the researcher requested some time to discuss with a group in a class their reactions and thoughts about this approach. However, the youth worker, a graduate but not a qualified teacher decided, in the middle of the observed PSHE lesson, to hand over the whole class to the researcher with no warning and no preparation for the taking of a lesson having been completed. The group discussion therefore had to be adapted to take all the young people into account and a whole class, researcher-led, discussion took place. The researcher explained the reason for the questions addressed on the subject of the ‘babies’ and also used the opportunity to ask the young people questions about the feelings and attitudes of people caught in the situation of an unwanted pregnancy during their teenage years. The reason for this change of approach by the youth worker may have been caused by her difficulty in controlling the class during her input and her wish to use the researcher to enable her to escape an increasingly fraught situation where the class was becoming very difficult. During the whole class discussion the young people’s response was excellent, both boys and girls taking part in equal numbers and after the establishment of ground rules by the researcher approaching the session in a sensible and controlled manner, listening to each other with interest and showing enthusiasm and commitment to the subject. This was probably partly due to the subject matter which was of great interest to the group, but also possibly to the fact that the researcher is an experienced teacher who was well used to dealing with this age group and subject and has no difficulty in class behaviour management. In the second school two lessons on sex education, specifically contraception, conducted by a second health worker were observed.

Research texts (Bell, 1999; Robson, 1993; Cohen et al., 2000) advise the researcher to transcribe notes on observations immediately after the event so as to prevent misinterpretations or memory loss, so these notes and narrative accounts were transcribed within twenty four hours of the observations taking place.

Trained sexual health workers used to working with boys and men

Two men, who are working on specific projects related to sexual health and AIDs HIV education with young men, were interviewed. Interviews were conducted with these workers but not with the teenagers with whom they were working as the health workers felt that such intrusion could have jeopardised their work. These two men had worked with male sex workers and with boys in schools and with young offenders in institutions. Questions were asked on the specific needs of boys as they the health workers perceived them, how boys respond to such work and on the methods and approaches the two men used when working with boys. One of the two men was homosexual and much of his work was with 'gay' men and boys, though he also worked in school classrooms with boys only and mixed groups. His particular field of interest was sexual health and the prevention of STIs in particular HIV/AIDs The second worker was a family planning officer working with young men in a variety of settings in the west of England.

Sex education in The Netherlands

In order to compare methodologies used in England with those used in The Netherlands, focus groups were conducted with students in a teacher training college and two interviews undertaken, one with a teacher educator of primary students and one with a secondary teacher who specialises in sex education. This was a very small scale study in the north of The Netherlands and therefore cannot be considered as generalisable, but it gives some indication of the methods used to deliver sex education in that country. This teacher training college in the north of the country trains students on four and two year courses. At present 500 students are in training. The College is small and separate from the main polytechnic of which it is a part.

Conclusion

This account concludes the fieldwork undertaken for this research. The material obtained from the fieldwork research carried out in the schools and with the alternative methods was collated and analysed. Results are presented in the following chapters.

A diagram (Fig iii) shows the interrelated nature of the sources used and the information obtained.

Figure iii Issues explored in the research and sources of information

Issues explored	Sources of information
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	Questionnaires to sixth formers and students	Interviews with PSHE co-ordinators	Focus group interviews	Alternative methods of delivery
Content of sex education	❖	❖	❖	❖
Separate or co-educational approaches	❖	❖	❖	❖
Opinions of sex educators on sex education	❖	❖	❖	❖
Boys' preferences for sex education delivery	❖	❖	❖	❖
Methods used to deliver sex education	❖	❖	❖	❖

Chapter 5 The Views of the PSHE co-ordinators

In all, eight PSHE co-ordinators were interviewed from the case study and the back-up schools. Responses were collated under the topics of interview questions. One further school (School I) was to be involved but only a short telephone interview was possible with the co-ordinator. All quotations are from individual school co-ordinators. The issues addressed are set out as headings below.

1. Position held by the co-ordinator

Seven of the co-ordinators held positions of responsibility and two were from senior management. The following list sets out their roles.

School A (male) Head of RE and PD

School B (female) Head of Year 10 and PSHE in the upper school teaches PE

School C (female) Joint head of Health Education - part time

School D (female) Head of Year 10 and teacher of English

School E (male) Deputy Head in charge of curriculum

School F (male) Deputy Head and teacher of geography

School G (female) Head of PSHE and teacher of modern foreign languages

School H (female) Head of PSHE and teacher of modern foreign languages

School I (male) Head of Guidance Faculty including careers, counselling and PSHE

2. The importance of PSHE in the school

Questions were asked about their perceptions of the importance of PSHE in the school. There was a wide variation in responses.

In School A PSHE was considered to have a high profile and was the first subject placed on the timetable, though this may have had something to do with the fact that it was delivered as part of a carousel. This involved classes in a year moving every six weeks between various subjects including IT and PSHE. This was in direct contrast to School B where the response was 'not at all important', the co-ordinator believing that the subject was not taken seriously by either staff or pupils. This was echoed by the replies from School F where the co-ordinator suggested that the appearance of tutorial time, in which PSHE sits, on the timetable gave a false impression as much of the time was taken up by routine administration. The Public School C however, showed a growth of importance in the subject over the last ten years moving from an ad hoc arrangement for housemasters to deliver, to a fully planned and delivered whole school programme. School D's attitudes to

PSHE had been strongly affected by the adverse OFSTED report and the co-ordinator reported that recently great efforts had been made to improve the subject's standing and delivery within the school, though there was still some way to go. School H had a new headteacher who was giving the area high priority and the co-ordinator felt she had a great deal of autonomy. There was a worry however over the change in times for lessons, increased from 35 minutes to one hour and ten minutes, 'too long' to allow for PSHE. Suggestions were also being made for a cut in time which she found extremely worrying. The response of the PSHE co-ordinator in the Newham School G was that the subject had to have a high priority as the needs of the school's pupils were so great. There was however she believed a lack of support from management as they had been without a head for some time and a new one was only recently in post. In the Notts School I there is a faculty devoted to guidance and career development and this had been highly praised in two OFSTED inspections, which gave the co-ordinator to believe that he was to some extent untouchable by management. School E has no PSHE co-ordinator but a pastoral team consisting of the heads of year governs the subject. They control sex education within PSHE.

3. Organisation of sex education

a) Group size

In the state schools this was large. The PSHE curriculum was generally delivered to whole class groups of around thirty, whereas in the public schools the group sizes were smaller. In School C, groups were between eight to ten and exceptionally twelve where a particular house group was large and in School F 15. In School B there were, on occasions, two teachers in place with a class but this was not always possible and if absences occurred or particular members of staff 'could not deal' with the sex education material, the co-ordinator alone took groups of up to an over fifty pupils together in the dining hall.

b) Relation to National Curriculum Science

All the schools apart from School A delivered sex education's biological aspects, mainly in science, as laid down in the National Curriculum. School A's co-ordinator said it could not be delivered in Science because of the right of withdrawal, and pupils could not be withdrawn from science. This was an extremely odd response in that sex education is a statutory part of NC science and withdrawal by parents from this is not an option, but it is possible the respondent was referring to the extra areas of sex education such as relationships. He was, however, adamant that no sex education took part in science in the

school. In PSHE in School A groups were composed of cross form groupings named by colours. This was done in all years to divide up ‘trouble makers’ and get the children to mix more widely. A carousel took place with the co-ordinator implying that both explicit and implicit sex education took place across the curriculum but that about 3 lessons per year were devoted to the explicit topic of sex education.

c) Time allowance.

This varied greatly between the schools in some ways reflecting the importance placed upon the subject by management. There was no sat al.lowance for sex education; this was left to the co-ordinators to plan. In most schools some of the sex education was covered in National Curriculum science so the PSHE section dealt with areas not covered by the science curriculum. In one school science and Religious Education alone dealt with the subject. Lesson time varies between schools from forty minutes to an hour.

Table 2 Sex Education in PSHE Time Allocated per Year

School	Years Taught	No. of sessions (lessons) per year
A	7, 9, 10	3
B	7,8,9,10	3
C	9,12	6 and 6 approx. in year 12
D	7, 8, 9, 10	3
E	7, 8, 9, 10, 11	3 relationships only
F	0 in PSHE some in tutorials time if tutors wish	0 in PSHE sex ed. in science and RE
G	7, 8, 9, 10, 11	Several per year (varies)
H	7, 8, 9, 10, 11	2-3 per year

In School B only 25 hours are devoted to PSE each year. The lesson is a floating one i.e. no set time on the timetable and not every week e.g. Week 1 Monday period 1, week 2 Monday period 2, and so on. This meant that staff lost main subject teaching time and anyone available in the staff room on a marking period had to be collected in to deliver the PSHE, if form tutors were not available. This caused enormous resentment. About 3 sessions per year are on sex education. Sex education is in biology in years 7, 8 and 9.

School C had input in term three of year 1 (Shell) which is actually 13-14 year olds. According to the co-ordinator the boys arrive with very varying inputs from prep school and home, some never having addressed the issue at all, whilst others considered themselves 'to know it all'. She deals with this by saying ‘great we can revise it’. The amount of time given to sex education appears to ‘be very fluid’ depending on the way the group discussion occur. In the sixth form there is a whole course ‘ The Way of Life’ involving a wide PSHE brief including sexually transmitted diseases and again depending

on an agenda raised by the boys. Biological aspects are also covered in science and the head of science is nominally joint head of PSHE, though in practice takes no part in lesson planning or delivery.

School D has about 3 PSHE lessons year on sex education in years 7-9 and whole days for year 10 on health related aspects such as contraception, attitudes and family cultures.

In School E National Curriculum Science covers the biological facts in KS 3 and 4. In PSHE the theme of relationships runs throughout all the years and PSHE is taught in tutorial time.

School F has 1 lesson per week of PSHE in years 7-13 tutorial time, but much time is taken up with homework diaries and administration. It depends on individual heads of houses how much time is devoted to different issues and also to sex education. Some boys do not start at the school until after common entrance at 13. 3-4 sessions a year are generally held on sex education and there is 'a great deal' in all years in the RE lessons on related topics like relationships. The whole comes from a Christian standpoint though not all the boys in the school are Christian but RE is very important and has 4 periods a week.

School G has 1 period a week PSHE in years 7-11 and sex education takes up several lessons per year.

School H has 1 period a week throughout the school and two to three sessions yearly are related to sex education

4. Content of lessons relating to sex – PSHE Science and RE

The following scalogram defines the content of the curriculum in descending order of what is covered and the schools in descending order of the numbers of areas covered in the curriculum.

The main similarities here appear to be the biological aspects, including contraception and HIV and AIDs and also general relationships. However, there was a large variation between schools in the coverage of the wider aspects of sex education and where the various elements were taught. This again appears to be a result of the school ethos and personal interests and beliefs.

Table 3 Content of lessons

Content	Schools							
	A	C	F	D	H	G	B	E
Puberty	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Biology	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Contraception	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
HIV/AIDs	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Relationships general/ responsibilities	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Attitudes and Beliefs	*		*	*				
Relationships sexual		*						
STIs	*	*						
Parenting					*	*		
Morals	*		*					
Decision making	*		*					
Homosexuality					*			
Masturbation		*						
Pornography	*							
Families				*				
Total topics covered	10	8	8	7	7	6	5	5

Schools E's co-ordinator admitted

We assume our pupils are heterosexual. We have to consider that we are dealing with children from a rural environment and do not cover homosexuality unless a child asks a question.

Contraception is taught but at different times and in some schools, for example, F left entirely to science and delivered by theory only. In School F also attitudes and beliefs and any discussion of sexually transmitted diseases are dealt with in RE and science.

Relationships are dealt with in general in the schools, though these tend to be more about friendships and bullying. Some co-ordinators admitted that sexual relationships as such were not covered.

We expect students to make the connection.

Co-ordinator School B

There seems to be a somewhat unrealistic expectation here of students' ability to transfer information between areas. The coverage of AIDs and HIV was across most schools, though at varying times. The issue here is the complexity of the topic and the ability of the pupils to understand at various points of maturation. There were also occasional lessons on separate subjects such as sex and the media (School H), reflecting the concerns of co-ordinators. Some schools used theme days to cover topics such as AIDs and School H's co-ordinator believed that much of the input on sexual behaviour, homosexuality, homophobia, contraception and STIs came too late in year 10 but there was no time on the year 9 timetable to move these topics. The co-ordinator for School C was very concerned

that masturbation was discussed, as in a boys' only boarding school it was an issue. Some house masters in front of peers humiliated boys caught masturbating as 'a matter of course'. No other co-ordinator mentioned this topic.

Most schools do nothing in year 11 due to exam pressures, but School H does have a session on HIV and Aids with an HIV positive person coming in from the Brook Advisory Clinic. School E does carry on with sex education in year 11 though details were vague. School C has a major course in lower sixth called the 'Way of Life'. This grew out of compulsory Religious Studies to allow students to cover 'things other than the academics which is so important here'. The agenda is very fluid 21 lecture theatre sessions followed by group discussions when pupils can follow up the talk or discuss something they choose. The course runs all year and includes AIDs, HIV and STIs and could be considered as coming rather late.

5. Separate sex or mixed sex classes in schools

Table 4 Whether mixed schools separate sexes or boys' schools bring in girls

Mixed Schools	Boys' Schools
A Mixed	C *Girls attend sixth form sessions
B Mixed	D No girls
E 1 session on menstruation for girls	F No girls
G Mixed	
H 1 session on well woman for girls	

School A would strongly disapprove unless about feminine hygiene. The co-ordinator thought that a case could be made for girls receiving specific instruction. The teacher 'needs to trouble shoot before the lesson' i.e. think of questions the pupils could ask and answer them so that there is 'no need for them to ask questions and be embarrassed by the others'. In School E and G and H mixed groups were used apart from one session in year 8 (E) where genders are separated for menstruation and PMT with the school nurse and one in H where the school nurse does a 'well woman' input to girls in year 11. Girls alone here are taught because of cost and time. She would like a well man session too, but at present finance does not allow this. The response from G was, 'separation is not possible because of the timetable'. School B's co-ordinator was incredulous.

No, no chance to do that. I sometimes use same sex groups but we have to take classes as we can. If I said to tutors divide them into single sex groups the numbers would be all over the place as we have some classes with many more boys than girls.

In Schools C and D and F boys only groups are used at present. C has tried to bring girls into the 'Way of Life' courses and the discussion groups afterwards. The co-ordinator did not believe this had worked because the boys have so few opportunities to work and be with girls. They behaved very badly. The girls used were from local independent schools with a high Asian population and were not in her opinion sufficiently assertive. The boys are more concerned, the co-ordinator believed with 'the girls' short skirts'. They could not cope with the girls and being 'chucked into such sensitive issues'.

really the girls are so much more mature living in the real world as opposed to this closed one - the difference is too great. The girls still come to the theatre talks but not to discussion groups its a cop out and was an opportunity for the boys to mix but my opinion is not listened to.

She believes that the culture of the boys which is not 'pc' would 'get them crucified' by most secondary girls and that they would 'not cope'. She therefore thinks that in this case single sex groups are better.

Schools D and F co-ordinators also thought that the boys would find it 'far too difficult'. 'Boys (School D) would pretend they knew things and show off so it is better to separate sexes'. It is possible that girls could be brought in to do role-plays, but the boys would need time alone first. 'Boys need to address specifics like wet dreams. We do look at girl's issues like puberty changes but haven't tried mixing sexes, need to get the sex education right first - it was a shambles before.'

6. Staff and Teaching Methods used

In the state schools it was generally the form teacher who taught PSHE. However in School A a team of year heads and the PSHE co-ordinator dealt with PSHE, not form tutors. This was possible as PSHE is taught on a carousel with IT, so does not cover all the year. In School D the sex education element of PSHE was delivered by the PSHE co-ordinator, as she felt that some members of staff could not deal with it. She had also prepared worksheets and a form of questionnaire to be completed in pairs for these sessions. In School B sex education was delivered by form tutors and co-tutors who helped. In some cases however, because of the rolling programme of floating lessons, anyone free at that time had to be employed to deliver the work with no preparation. Some tutors felt unable to deal with the sex education and on occasions the co-ordinator was dealing with groups of 50 plus on her own. She had tried to prepare work and give it to

tutors in advance but they lost it, or failed to look at it until they had to deliver it, so she had stopped giving out work in advance. The ad hoc arrangements for PSHE lessons in any case made it difficult to introduce innovative methods, as she was unsure until the day who would be teaching it and what the teachers could cope with. There was no possibility of pre-planning. She believed that a dedicated PSHE team, ‘like in the maths department’ would be a good step forward. The strong message here was of a subject not valued by school management.

The co-ordinator in School E believed very strongly that using too many outsiders lost the personal touch. The relationships between form tutors and their students were seen as vital to establishing the right environment for teaching such personal topics. The co-ordinator believed that a dedicated PSHE team would also have positive and negative aspects as again these teachers would not have a close, developing relationship with their pupils. It is the form tutor to whom the worried or distressed child goes and he believed that this relationship is too valuable to dismiss. He believed that something in between the ‘specialist’ and the form tutor was required. Tutor teams should work together and play to their strengths.

Occasionally the school nurse was used (School E) or had been used (School A) but dropped because of cost. Some schools had used theatre groups in the past but not recently due to costs and the fact that limited numbers were required. Most schools used discussion methods and some group work was done. School A did not use group work as it was considered by the co-ordinator that group work ‘wastes too much time’ from all the content of sex education that needs to be delivered. He thought that group work presented ‘too many problems’ because it ‘needs you to know the group well and on a carousel scheme there is not time to do this, particularly when you use a team of year heads who are not class tutors’. Peer tutoring was not used in any of the schools. There was some resistance to the idea from the School A co-ordinator, who thought that there would be ‘resistance from parents’ and the training of pupils would ‘take too long’ as they would need to know so many facts and could give the wrong information’. The co-ordinator in School D expressed a wish to try peer tutoring but felt that she needed help to do this.

Table 5 Main methods used to deliver sex education

Methods in descending frequency of use	Schools in descending order of amounts of methods used							
	H	B	D	E	A	G	C	F
Teacher information	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Worksheets	*	*	*	*	*	*		

Video	*		*	*	*		
Outside speakers	*		*	*		*	*
Discussion		*			*	*	*
Group work	*	*		*			*
Questionnaires/anonymous questions		*	*				
Demonstrations of contraceptives	*	*					
Role play	*						
Agony aunt sessions	*						

Some worksheets and questionnaires were used for sex education and also games and quizzes were employed here and there. Videos were also fairly popular but many co-ordinators felt that what they had were out of date. The co-ordinator for School A believed that many video messages were soon forgotten especially those containing government messages and that they were not of much use. He did use a series of programmes but these were twelve years old. He believed however, that they ‘gave a balanced argument and are acceptable because the law has not changed’.

School B made some attempt to use ‘active methods’ to deliver sex education using half groups where possible i.e. form tutors plus helper. Questionnaires were popular here to assess levels of understanding before and after teaching sex education topics. Friendship groups were used wherever possible for discussion, though this could ‘cause problems’. Games were used.

Demonstrations of contraceptives and practical sessions on condom use were used though this was not done in all schools. In School B the co-ordinator had included this in Year 10 during the present academic year as it had been left out of the previous year 9 because of cost. She had acquired a ‘job lot’ of condoms from a teacher friend (‘I don’t know where she got them from and I didn’t ask’). She also expressed the wish to use outsiders and theatre groups but there ‘is no money’. She explained that even help from the borough, since the school had gone GM, had not been affordable. Formerly the Borough Advisor had been an excellent source of support and materials still in use in the school had come from that source. She was hoping that with foundation status things might change but doubted that they would. No other school mentioned help from Local Authorities with regard to materials or methodology in this area of the curriculum.

In the public school C, most of the work was done in small groups (8-10) using discussion led by a team of outsiders. In year 12 visiting speakers were used to stimulate discussions bi-weekly, though the boys had a free choice of topics to cover in subsequent small group discussions, led mostly by the outside team with one or two members of the teaching staff

involved, who had volunteered. The co-ordinator explained that all of the group leaders other than her were volunteers and that it was becoming increasingly difficult to recruit people to work for nothing in a major public school. The whole delivery here appeared to be very informal, a deliberate attempt to change the atmosphere from the 'academic hothouse' of other subjects. She found that the boys took a good while to adapt to this unusual approach, using first names for each other and for the group leader. Some found this very difficult to cope with and 'find the (school name) scarf a useful hiding place'. Group work took place in a variety of venues, to suit timetabling and the group leaders. She often ran groups around her kitchen table. For the sixth form work she noted that good quality speakers were essential to stimulate good discussions and that they had to be 'in context' that is from the same or similar culture groups to those of the boys, or the message was not received. She gave examples of excellent talks from people whose accents were northern or where the message had been anti-male and that these messages had been totally rejected by the boys. It was essential she thought to 'work within the culture group'.

The use of outside speakers was also employed as a technique in several schools where visitors were brought in to run 'special days' particularly on subjects such as HIV and AIDs in years 10 or 11 (Schools D, E, G, H). The general feeling here was that specialist topics required people with knowledge to deliver them. In Newham (School G), where the Teenage Health Project is running, a great deal of use was made by the school of this team and their expertise. The Project team delivers sessions in each year group and covers most of the sex education within the PSHE lessons. The co-ordinator welcomed them as experts able to 'deal with subjects that the staff would not feel comfortable with' and with the added bonus of 'being cheap'.

In two schools (B, D) the anonymous questions method was employed in sex education classes with pupils writing down questions to be covered by staff at a later time or as in School D responded to in writing.

Role-play did not appear to be used in any of the schools for sex education apart from in School H, though it was a common technique employed in English. In School D the co-ordinator thought that the delivery team for PSHE, consisting of all form tutors would include members of staff who could not cope with this technique, so it was not used.

In School F the housemasters deliver PSHE. A central syllabus is available as is the offer of advice and support materials but it is up to individual masters if they want to use them. The main method employed appears to be a factual input followed by discussion with, very rarely, an outside speaker being used. There was an acknowledgement that in recent years the curriculum in PSHE had been slanted towards the dangers of drugs and alcohol and that sex education had been 'neglected'.

The co-ordinator in School H suggested that a variety of methods was available such as pair and group discussion, case studies, agony aunt sessions, ranking exercises and role play but all this depended on who was teaching the sex education. She also admitted that certain tutors could not cope with some of these methods of delivery, particularly mentioning maths teachers as an example of those who found these 'active methods' difficult. The deputy head from School E also mentioned that the use of 'innovative methods of delivery' were affected by the use of form tutors who 'may not be able to cope'.

In no case was the sex of the teacher involved considered; their position such as tutor, housemaster, year head, or in some cases whoever was available at the time, being the only criteria used to decide who delivered the sex education. In the boys' schools it was therefore generally males who worked in this area except for School D where the female PSHE co-ordinator delivered the sex education. The co-ordinator in School A did not consider the sex of the teacher to be important and that a positive experience was the most important consideration. Age too did not seem to be considered important by the co-ordinators and School A believed that experience of teaching other subjects was very important before embarking on sex education delivery, so only senior teachers were used. In School C all the deliverers at the early stage were female, as they were volunteers, though at the sixth form level some of the male housemasters took part as group leaders. The co-ordinator for School B thought that being given a choice of a teacher's sex when planning sex education delivery, was 'a luxury' she could not contemplate.

It appeared that much of the delivery in all of the schools was didactic, Schools A and F being the schools that most favoured this method.

7. The training of teachers in this area

In School A the 'track record' of the teacher was considered very important and some training was offered in school through team self support and teachers could ask to go on

outside courses if the money was available. In most cases, however there was little or no training of the teachers delivering sex education. Science teachers were prepared for the biological aspects by PGCE courses but the aspects covered in PSHE, the co-ordinators believed were not covered in initial Teacher Training courses and there were few opportunities for in-service training. Attempts were made in some of the state schools to help teachers deal with this area of the curriculum. Some inset was provided in School D and in School H the PSHE co-ordinator went to year team meetings to talk about PSHE and sex education coverage; she had in the past been allowed part of an in-service day. In public school F house tutors took the tutorials and no training was given, but in School C consultants were used to train the group leaders and this was considered important. Many of the adults involved here came from educational or health backgrounds and had experience in dealing in this area. In School E every three years there was Inset for those involved in sex education and outside health experts are used to update information and to meet the needs of new teachers. Access to this training however, depended on when a teacher joined the school. In School B the co-ordinator believed that if sex education is to be taken seriously she needs much more time to prepare her staff. She is not, in her opinion, given sufficient time to prepare material or to brief staff on how to deliver it. School G attempted to overcome the lack of training problem by using health workers from the Teenage Health Project to deliver the sex education programme outside National Curriculum Science.

8. The co-ordinators aims for the sex education programmes

Table 6 Aims of the programmes

Aims as stated by the co-ordinator at interview	Schools							
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
Informed choices/decision making	*				*			
Meet needs of diverse groups		*					*	
Teen preg. rates down							*	
Produce a safe/relaxed environment			*					
Improve sex education in school				*				
Teach sex ed with a Christian focus						*		
No real aims previously considered								*

School A put skills in decision making high in their aims. The co-ordinator was very aware of the need to help students resist the ‘enormous influences’ put on them by the media and by peer pressure to become involved, too early, in sexual relations and to be aware of the differences between pupils’ beliefs and values. Teaching children how to say no was considered important by most co-ordinators and in many cases high priority was given to the need to make sure that the facts believed by the pupils were correct and that myths and

misunderstandings were demolished. The co-ordinators for Schools B and G were eager to cover the needs of a highly diverse group of pupils and in the case of G to lower teenage pregnancy rates. This was the only school to mention this as a definite aim. School C's aims were to provide a 'safe relaxed environment' in which the boys could discuss sensitive personal subjects. The co-ordinator being keen, to provide a contrast to the high-pressured academic climate of the school. She was aware that for many of the Shell boys this was their first time away from home and family. The programme was designed to help the boys when they met girls later, as the school she believed, was an 'enclosed and unnatural environment' doing 'little to prepare them for the real world'.

The aims of the co-ordinator in School D were very heavily focussed on the need to improve PSHE in general and sex education in particular, as a result of the adverse OFSTED report the school had previously received. She was aware that the boys' needs had not been met and had been given the task of re-writing the whole programme in an effort to improve provision. She too was eager to provide information, which would enable the boys to make 'informed choices'. This was repeated by the co-ordinator in School E whose aims were to educate pupils in making choices, considering the needs of others and to make pupils responsible and to be able to make decisions 'for themselves'. He offered a rider to this, in that he believed the school had to work 'within the somewhat conservative situation in which we find ourselves' (a rural area of Northamptonshire). He wanted to inform and raise issues. The concerns of School F reflected the Christian basis of the education provided there. Sex education was taught with a 'Christian focus of right and wrong' and intent on ensuring the 'safety of the boys' giving them the make their own judgements and decisions from a Christian standpoint, making them responsible members of society. The co-ordinator for School H admitted to never before having considered the aims of the sex education programme she provided, but on reflection thought that they were 'possibly to equip kids with the necessary skills to make useful decisions about the future'.

9. The extent to which the programmes meet the needs of boys or girls

School A co-ordinator considered that the programme offered met the needs of both boys and girls, but it appeared doubtful if this aspect had really been considered. His response appeared to be more of an assumption than a demonstration that the subject had been carefully discussed. It appeared that most of the planning and organisation was in his hands and that little questioning of his decisions occurred. School E thought on reflection

that the school programme did not meet the needs of either boys or girls and that the questioning had made the co-ordinator determined to rethink the programme. Most of the respondents did not seem to have thought about the learning styles of boys and girls and that they may have different needs. Several schools, for example School D, appeared to have considered learning styles in other subject areas but not in PSHE or sex education. School C attempts to set things within the culture of the boys and School G has to bear in mind the ethnic mix and considered this rather than sex. The co-ordinator of School H felt that their delivery is more suited to the needs of girls, though there are more boys than girls in each year group and she believes that the school does not take sufficient account of this. She believed that the pupils' responses to the course had changed in the last few years and that the school had not adjusted to meet the changing needs of the pupils.

10 Sources of materials used

Most schools used some materials from outside sources, such as the Health Education Authority, on which to base their resource planning but adapted them to meet particular needs. No one mentioned the Sex Education Forum as a source of useful materials. Many co-ordinators mentioned that material quickly becomes dated and that the lack money for resource updating was a severe problem. In School D the co-ordinator has £600 per annum to deliver PSHE in the upper school and that could be used up on paper and that sending one member of staff on a course could use the whole amount. She also would have preferred to use more outside speakers who were up to date, but the school's financial situation did not allow her to do this. School A made use of commercially produced resources but not a programme devised by others and this was the general trend though the co-ordinator for School E expressed concern about using self-devised materials as this could be in his opinion 'dangerous'

11. AIDs and HIV Education

Table 7 Delivery of AIDs and HIV education

Main point of delivery of information re HIV/AIDs	Schools							
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
Year 7								
Year 8								
Year 9								
Year 10	*	*		*	*	*	*	
Year 11								*
Years 12/13				*				

In School B this is covered in year 10 (Table 6) with a questionnaire and a high-risk low risk game about HIV infections. School C addressed this in the Shell year (year 9), in a brief way but then in the sixth form 'Way of Life' programme used a visiting speaker who

is HIV positive. This is also done in year 11 in School H. Schools D and G also used outside experts to address this area, though School D in addition, had a passing input in year 7. This was echoed in School A where the subject was raised in Year 7 and revisited in Year 10, but in this case the normal school team were used to deliver the material. School F addressed this area in year 10 and 11 science where they also cover other STIs, whilst School E have input in year 10. This is an area of the curriculum deemed statutory, that is it must be delivered and all schools appeared to be following these requirements though the varying ages at which this was taught could be questioned.

12. Pornography

This was considered an essential element of sex education by School A. There was real concern from the co-ordinator here about the sexually explicit nature of girls' teen magazines which in his opinion were highly irresponsible and should be careful to give more of a moral message. He firmly believed that the lower pregnancy rates in Holland and Germany could be attributed to the lack of pornographic material available in newsagents and garages there, showing a different attitude to sex in those cultures. Our attitude, he believed, was a mixture of titillation and prudery, which is encouraged by the popular press. Other co-ordinators, in some cases alarmed at the suggestion, admitted they had never considered it, or as in the case of School B agreed that nothing was done. The co-ordinator in this case explained that the only thing that occurred in her school was that magazines were confiscated from boys and in some cases boys suspended. There appeared to be a real reluctance on the part of the co-ordinators to deal with this issue.

13. Homosexuality

Table 8 Homosexuality

Discussion of homosexuality	Schools							
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
Yes			*					*
No	*	*		*		*		
Only if raised by pupils				*				
Left to visitors to discuss relationships						*		

School E only covered this area if children asked questions, whilst School G left it to the visiting team of health workers, who do not specifically address the subject but bring it into relationships discussions and do what they can to challenge homophobic statements in the lessons. In School C homosexuality is a real concern because the pupils are 'very frightened' of it. All group leaders are aware they have to address this topic. There is always some embarrassment and comment about the obviously gay masters. In School F

the Christian background of the School appeared to discourage discussion and to be designed to give the impression that this was not normal activity and disapproved of by God, a message that appeared to come more from the Religious Studies input than the tutor periods. School H specifically addresses sexual behaviour homo and heterosexuality in year 10.

14. The importance of education in relationships

All schools thought this of great importance and attempted to build this into their programmes though many co-ordinators commented on the lack of time for this. Several co-ordinators put relationships education as the most important part of their programme, that it was the foundation. School A were intent on viewing relationships from a moral stance, but was aware of the differing cultural expectations within the school which made this difficult, as the values of the different cultures on occasions clashed. This was particularly evident over the place and standing of women.

15. Parents' attitudes to the programme and withdrawals and number of pregnancies in the school.

Several schools thought parents were pleased that the schools were taking the burden of sex education from them, though most co-ordinators thought it should be a partnership. Methods of informing and contacting parents varied from letters to invitations to view the programme. School H made no effort to inform parents about the specific curriculum for sex education 'we don't do it for maths why should we for sex education?' but included a general statement in the school brochure. This school had some children withdrawn from lessons, mostly members of a particular religious sect. In Schools B and D some children from particular groups were withdrawn but later attended lessons. The co-ordinators suspected that letters, sent in subsequent years, were not getting home, but the school had covered its legal responsibility so no questions were asked. School G has a high proportion of children from Muslim families and at times fifty to sixty per cent of children are withdrawn from lessons. The co-ordinator admitted that this was a problem and that anyway 'their mates told all in the playground afterwards'. School B's co-ordinator admitted to being 'very careful about how you phrase the letter' and in any case she did not know if the letters ever got home. School E suggested it was better not to include an acceptance slip with the letter and School C thought that many of the boys had 'very distant relationships' with their parents as they had been sent away to school at seven or

eight and desperately needed the input. The parents in this case she believed 'didn't much care' what was done, they 'weren't interested'.

Teenage pregnancy figures were generally very low, though School B was in a 'problem area' and School G in a borough that had only recently begun to tackle very high numbers of teen pregnancies. Numbers had been dropping here but were still well above the national average. Co-ordinators admitted that they had no access to school figures and that things were often 'hushed up'.

16. Evaluations of lessons

This was very patchy. It was attempted in an ad hoc manner in most schools, sometimes at intervals of several years. Little evaluation of the programmes seemed to be done with the pupils and School A said that in any case pupils always said that what they had done was 'rubbish and they couldn't remember'. School C however, took this aspect very seriously and issued questionnaires to the sixth form after the 'Way of Life' programme. As a result of this feedback approaches and content had been changed over the years. The group leaders also met to discuss and evaluate the programme. School F was a complete contrast and merely offered help to house tutors suggesting they could come to see the co-ordinator if they needed help or wanted to discuss the programme. A meeting was held once a term to hand out material. School D alone in the state sector gave short written evaluation sheets after each module to the pupils mainly to see 'what they had learned' but also to glean ideas of how well the programme had 'gone over'.

17. Ways in which the programme could be improved

The one common comment was the need for more time to be allocated to this area and that it should be taken more seriously by teachers, management, pupils, parents and OFSTED. Time for planning and staff meetings was wanted and more money to buy in materials and outside help. Staff training was also high on the agenda and seen as essential especially in schools where all staff were involved. Several of the co-ordinators mentioned the lack of input in ITT courses. Help with the use of innovative methods such as peer work was mentioned and School H 's co-ordinator wanted time to work at adjusting the programme to meet the needs of both sexes as at present it was, she believed, too 'girl focussed'.

Schools' commitment to Sex Education in PSHE

The commitment to sex education in the schools varied. In some the provision and thinking about sex education was static, co-ordinators carrying on with routines used each

year. In two schools the provision appeared to be rising in importance (Dynamic) and in two others becoming less important in the curriculum (Dynamic).

Table 9 Schools commitment to sex education

Status of Commitment	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
Static	*		*		*		*	
Dynamic ↑				*		*		
Dynamic ↓		*						*

Commitment Patterns

There appears to be little correlation between the status of sex education within PSHE in the schools in relation to the characteristics of the schools, but rather to random events such as the beliefs of the head, personality and determination of the co-ordinator, or availability of funding. In the four schools where the position appears to be static, the co-ordinators were quite pleased with what was being done though were always looking for improvement. In A there was a belief that things were well organised and likely to remain so, whereas in C the co-ordinator believed that ten years of planning and change had resulted in a fairly good system within the public school context. School E however, appeared not to see sex education as a cause for concern preferring to concentrate on drugs. In School G there was a belief that as long as the Teenage Health Project kept up their work there was no need for the school to be concerned. However, the co-ordinator was aware of the precarious funding of the Project and worried that it might fail.

In the two schools where there was a rising interest reasons were different. School F's co-ordinator was keen to provide some sex education for the boys and determined to change the attitudes of the head, whilst if School D the impetus had been an adverse OFSTED report. In the two Schools where there was concern of lessening involvement in School B money and lack of interest by the head were the problem. School H's concern however was the proposed timetable changes which, despite the head's professed support for the subject could she believed adversely affect the PSHE delivery in subsequent years.

It becomes clear from these findings that the provision of sex education in the schools surveyed is to a large extent idiosyncratic and based on personal or school philosophies and beliefs. The varying nature of provision is alarming, as is the apparent lack of continuity or progression. Timetable and staffing constraints appear to come before the

needs of pupils for input at the right time. Individuals in the schools are, in most cases it appears, committed to providing input but any enthusiasm appears personal as opposed to collective and it is clear that many reluctant teachers are being forced to teach this area with little training, resources or support and areas of the curriculum are being missed or merely referred to when questions are asked. This is not an encouraging picture considering the rising pregnancy rates of teenagers, the alarming rise in STIs and 'promiscuity' (BMA in BBC, 2002) and the continuing breakdown of relationships.

Chapter 6 Results from the Fieldwork: questionnaires, school and university students

The results from the questionnaires were collated by school and student groups. Responses were recorded as percentages of the number of respondents from each source and rounded to the nearest whole number. Following this the results from all the schools and student groups were put together and the gross percentage of respondents' answers calculated. Allowance was made for the slight variation between questionnaires which had been required by the use of single sex and co-educational schools with questions about the separation of the sexes and the inclusion of girls recorded separately. The qualitative responses from the final question were also recorded for each school and student group, collated and individual responses of note recorded for quotation.

1. The Respondents

a) Numbers of respondents from schools

Table 10 Schools and respondent numbers

School A	99,	, School D	51	School G	20,
School B	37,	School E	20	School H	29,
School C	81, ,	School F	39,		

b) Numbers of undergraduate student respondents 66.

c) Total number of completed questionnaires = 422

Table 11 Ages of Respondents

% of ages to nearest whole number

Schools	% age 16	% age 17	Students	% age 18-21	% age 22-25
A	42	58		83	17
B	24	76			
C	80	20			
D	25	75			
E	50	50			
F	64	36			
G	55	45			
H	86	14			
Total	53	47	Total	83	17

Total of whole number of respondents

Age 16 = 45% Age 17 = 40% Age 18-21 = 13% Age 22-25 = 2%

There was a fairly even split of the ages of school students. 53% 16 years, 47% 17 years.

The students' ages were biased towards the lower age range which ensured that they had recent knowledge of the school curriculum for sex education.

Sex of respondents

Males 307 = 69% Females 135 = 31%

There was a much greater proportion of males than females in the total number of respondents. This had been deliberately weighted as the subject of the research here was boys and their feelings and attitudes to the sex education they received. The responses from the girls however, do add a further dimension to the research, as it is interesting to ascertain if their responses are in any way different to those of the boys.

2. Current situation in schools

- Subjects (could be more than one) in which respondents believed sex education had been taught by percent and school (to nearest whole number).

Table 12 Subjects in which sex education was taught

Taught in	Schools								U/Students
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	
Science			93			100			18
PSE only									36
PSE/Sci	100						100	93	30
Form/tutor time		100							16
PSE/form time				100	100			7	
Health ed			99						
Way of Life			36						

Responses (Table 9) demonstrated the enormous variety of delivery between schools. In School F science was the only area working on sex education and students in School C also believed that the input from science was high 93% of pupils naming science as a main contributor. Interestingly these schools were the public schools. School C’s students however, also cited the work done in the health education course (99%) and the Way of Life course (36%), showing the impact of those courses on students’ perceptions. The lower rate for the Way of Life course was possibly because students considered this a broad course offering insights into many areas, not just sex education. In the state schools A and G, 100% of students believed that science and PSHE were the areas that delivered sex education. Schools D and E had science and form time as the places for delivery, whereas School B students believed that form time was the only area in which sex education had been covered. As sex is a statutory part of National Curriculum science it appears that the biological facts mandatorially delivered in science had made little impression. In School H most students cited Science and PSHE but 7 % thought that PSHE and form time were the lessons used. The responses from students at the university showed a similar diversity of experience. PSHE only being the most frequent response (36%), form time the second (30%) and science only and PSHE plus form time getting 18% and 16% of

votes respectively. It is unlikely that this wide variety is conducive to consistent and structured delivery of the subject and appears to reflect the dilemma of schools as to the position of sex education in the curriculum and the confused nature of government guidance. It is apparent that not all students, because of the fragmentation of delivery, see the relationship between the information given in the different areas. School B students' responses, which totally ignored the contributions from statutory National Curriculum Science, clearly support this point. School B's co-ordinator in her response described science as a major contributor to sex education in the school and the students responded 'yes' to the question on biological facts in the curriculum which are not covered in PSHE in the school. However, they do not appear to make connections between the subject areas, thinking the biological facts must have been delivered in PSHE. The place of sex education in the curriculum needs to be more centralised into one area to allow pupils to make these connections. One solution to this confusion could be an overall introduction explaining to students where the various sections will be delivered, with a co-ordinator responsible for ensuring complete delivery and all teachers for ensuring linking between the various areas.

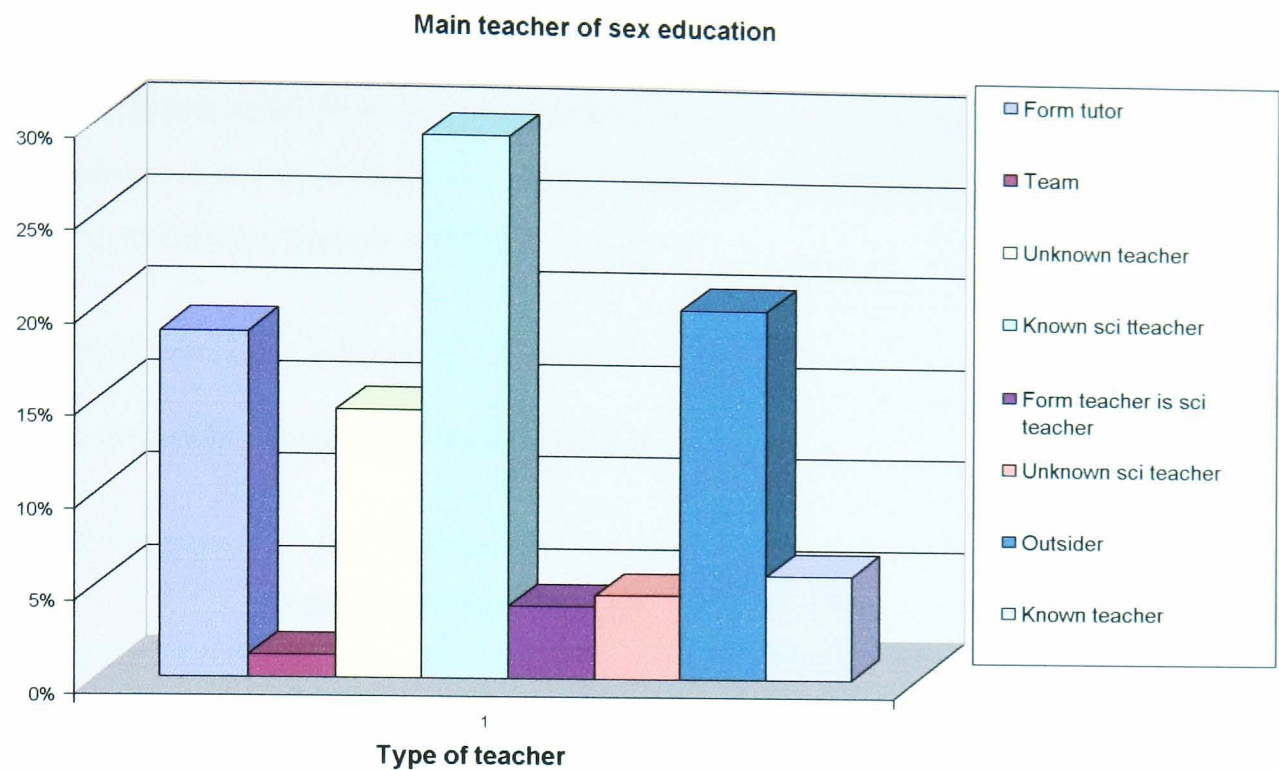
- Who teaches sex education – the main teacher.

Teacher who was the main deliverer in the eyes of respondents by school % for each teacher.

Table 13 The main teacher of sex education

Teacher	School								U/students
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	
Form tutor	8	42	0	6	60	0	0	7	46
Team	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	9
Unknown teacher	57	5	12	0	0	0	0	48	9
Known sci.teacher	18	41	11	67	0	9	0	28	11
Unknown sci teacher	7	5	10	25	0	10	0	3	6
Form teacher who	0	0	0	0	30	0	0	0	6
was a science teacher									
An outsider	0	0	70	0	0	0	100	0	2
Other known teacher	11	3	0	0	10	0	0	14	14

Figure iv Main teacher of sex education



Most noticeable here is the spread of responses within each school. Only School G recorded a 100% response citing one teacher, whilst in contrast the students cited all eight options and School B's students named six out of the possible eight options with form tutor (42%) and known science teacher (41%) being the two most popular. This is strange in that their responses to where sex education is delivered completely ignored science. Citing science teachers here could of course reflect that science teachers were drafted in to help, when form teachers were on the other site during PSHE lessons. Schools A and H responses were nearly as diverse with five kinds of teachers featuring in responses. School D had four of the alternatives, Schools C and E three and School F two. The variety of these responses could possibly be equated to students' perceptions of individual teachers' impact or to their understanding of subject importance in school hierarchies. Science teachers featured in 38% of all responses reflecting the dominance of science in sex education delivery and the complaints of students as to the over-concentration on this aspect of sex education.

Outsiders featured most strongly in School G (100%), the health project team and in School C (79%) the health education team. The use of unknown teachers was overall 19% and particularly prevalent in School A (56.6%), reflecting the co-ordinator's use of his 'experienced senior team' and in Schools H where form tutors were supposed to take the classes. However, due to the split site nature of this school other teachers are often drafted

in for PSHE when the form teacher is timetabled on the other site. To an extent these responses underline the previous point in that they show the lack of continuity of delivery and that teachers from a wide variety of disciplines are involved in sex education delivery. As most of these, apart from science teachers, have received no training at all in the subject area, confidence in the work in the schools in respect of progression, full coverage and good quality delivery cannot be high.

- Years in which sex education was taught.

Figure v Years in which taught schools A-E

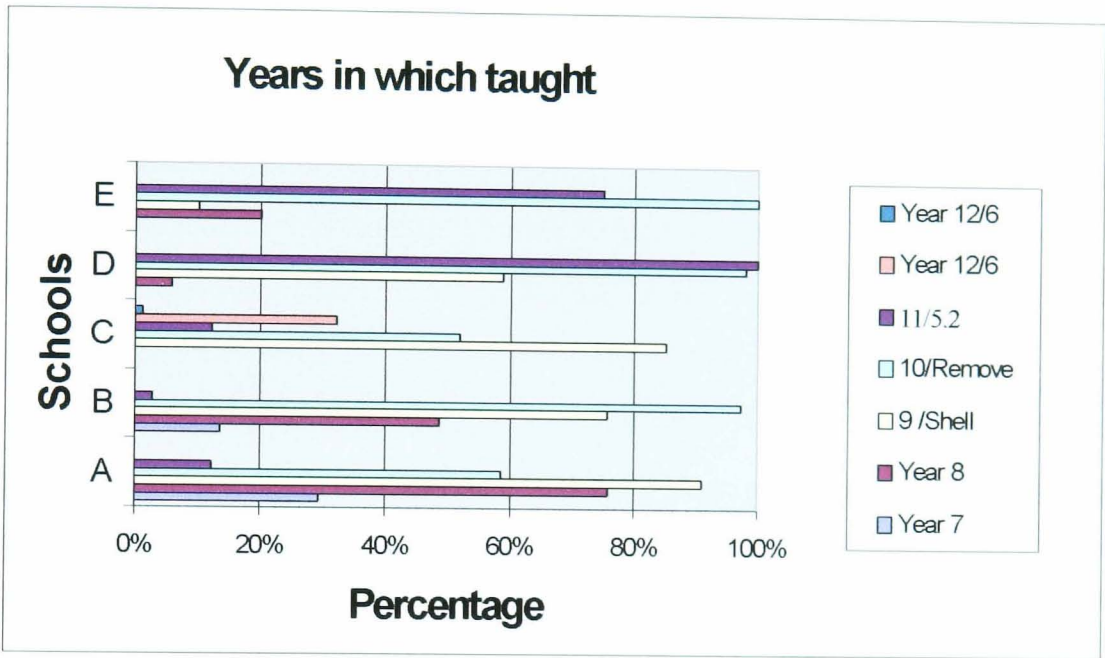
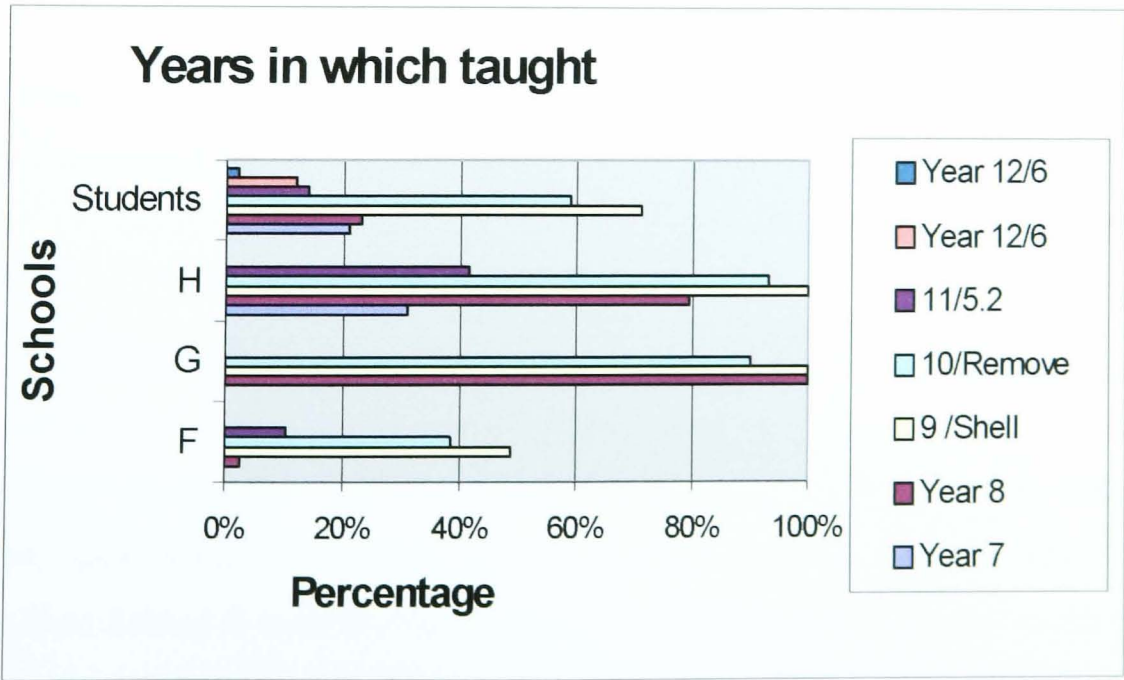


Figure vi Years in which taught in schools F-H



Overall results sex education taught in: -

Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11	Year 12
11%	41%	71%	76%	30%	5%

(See Figs. v for Schools A-E and Fig. vi for Schools F-G and the Students)

School C did not begin until the 'Shell year' equivalent to Year 9. Schools E, F and G registered 0 in Year 7 with low responses for Year 8. The students' main response was Year 9 with 71% believing sex education was delivered then and this was echoed by high positive results from the schools A 90%, B 76%, C 85%, G and H 100%. Exceptions to this were from School E 10% and F 49% with School D registering 59%. Results from Year 10 were more even in that all responses apart from School F (38%) were above 50% with C at 98%, B at 97% and H at 93%.

Year 10 was the most popular year for input (76%), closely followed by year 9 (71%). 41% considered that they had input in year 8 but only 11% in year 7. There was some work in year 11 (30%) though exam pressures obviously took their toll and little appears to be done in years 12 and 13 (5% and 0.3% respectively). To a certain extent this aligns itself with National Curriculum science at Key Stage 3 and 4, but the too little too late concern obviously applies when the age for sexual experimentation is reducing and the rates of early teen pregnancy rising. Much of the work on contraception is left to year 10 and students can be 14 years old and possibly nearly 15 before this aspect is covered. With the rising number of children entering puberty early and the age for sexual experimentation reducing this seems inappropriate. Responses here equate to a certain extent with the responses with those from the PSHE co-ordinators and again show the broken nature of input across years, which cannot allow for progression. Discrepancies between what pupils' believed was delivered and the co-ordinators' factual inputs can be the result of confused memories of past school years.

- Student's evaluation of sex education received.

(Fig. vii results from Schools A-E Fig. vii results from School F-H and the students. Fig. ix Overall results)

The spread of opinion was considerable. Few respondents believed their sex education excellent, responses in this category coming from only Schools A, and C, and the students. Results from School G were the most unusual in that they only registered in the good, quite good, an okay categories, this being the school in which the outside team were responsible for sex education. School F's results were particularly low (44% not good or

poor), reflecting the students' complaints about an overly science based curriculum. These judgements were subjective and students had little knowledge of alternatives against which to assess the quality of the sex education they had received.

Figure vii Sex education evaluation schools A-E

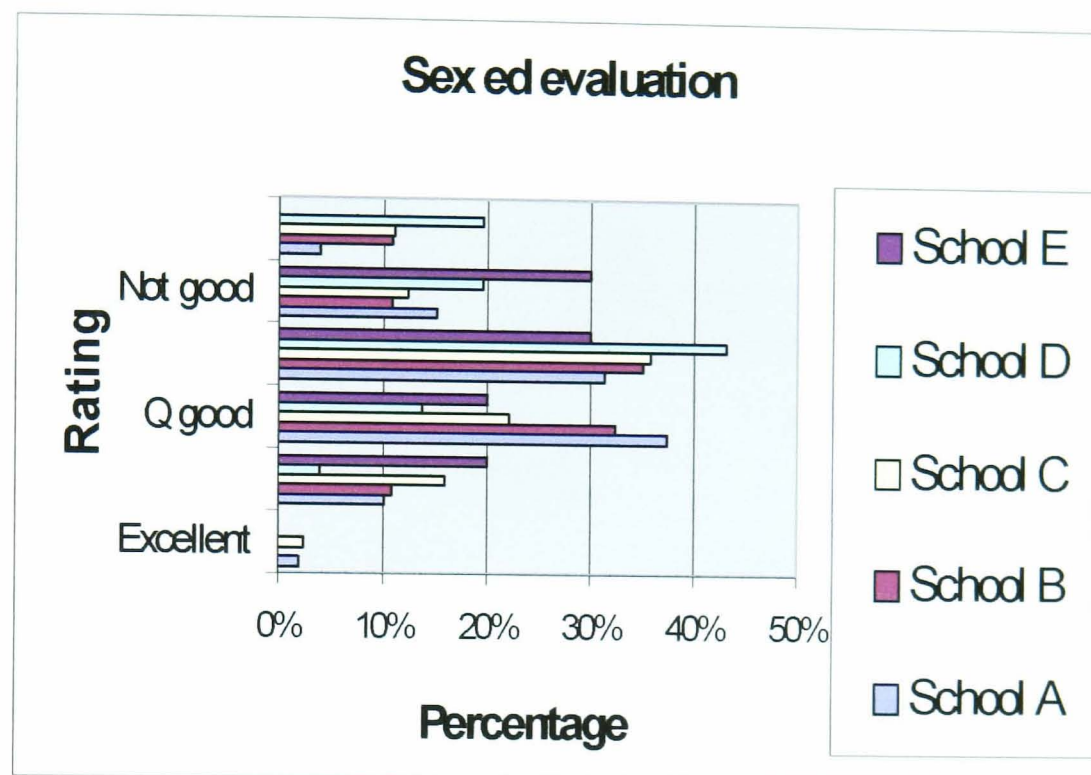


Figure viii Sex education evaluation schools F-H and students

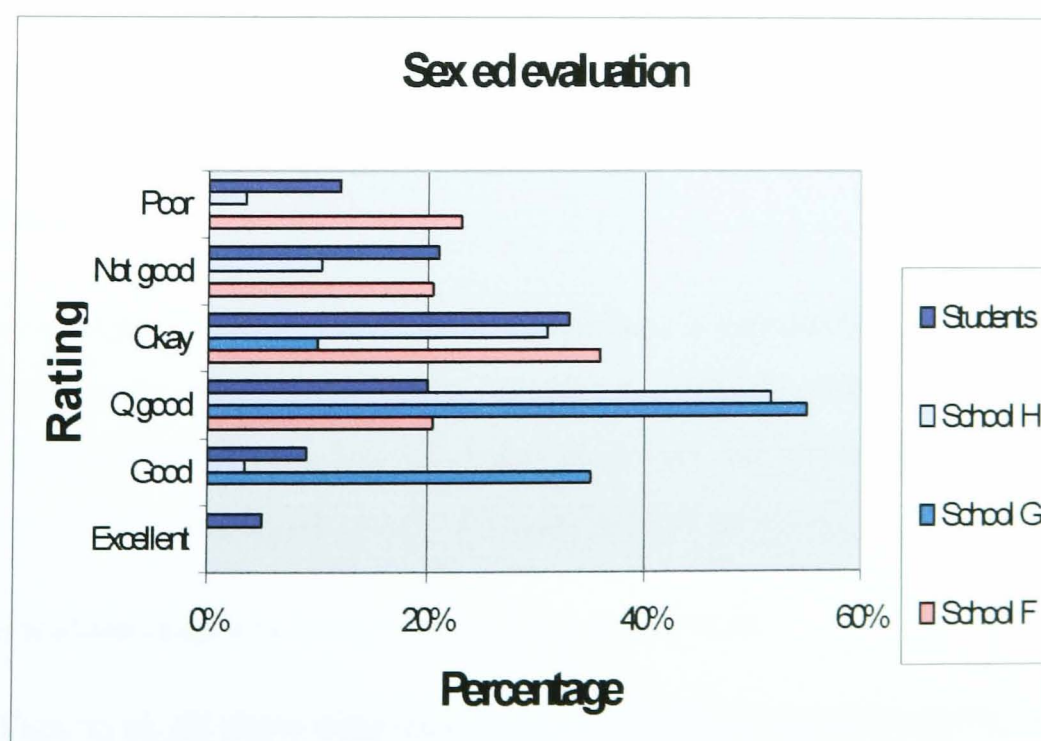
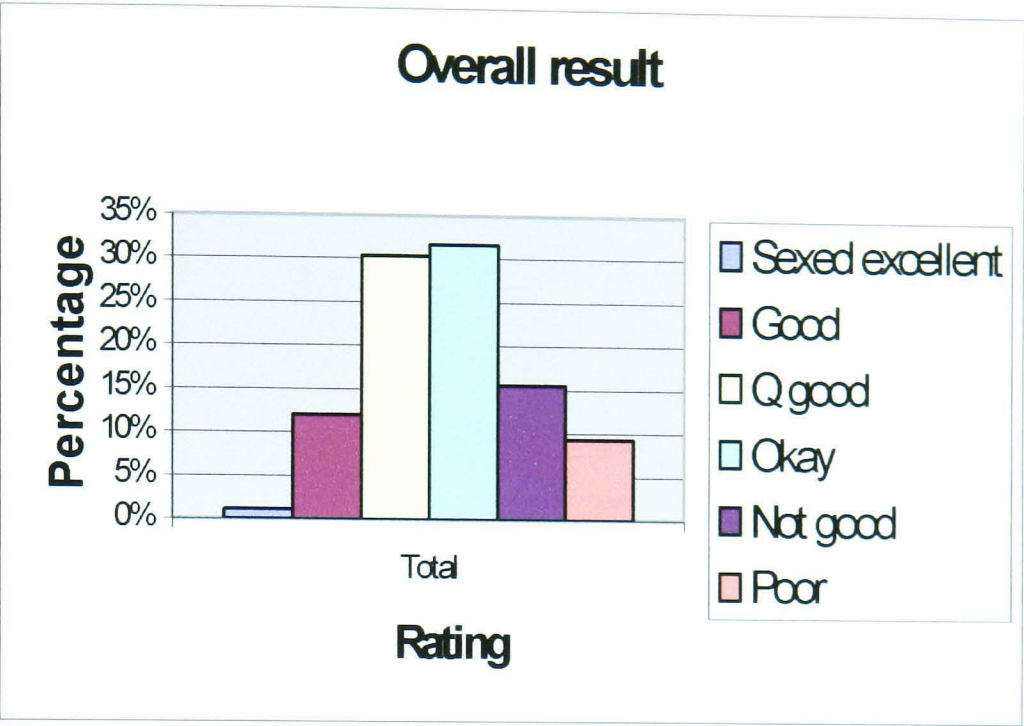


Figure ix Overall result judgement on sex education received



There appeared to be no particular effects related to school type such as single sex, coeducation or to state or private control. The results reflected the individual nature and diversity of the delivery in the schools. In the mixed schools the spread of opinions across the sexes showed no particular sexual divide, boys and girls had diverse opinions on the value of their sex education. Apparently the use of the outsider team in School G gave more satisfaction to the students than where teams of school staff were used.

Not good or poor results ranged from: -

School F 44%, School D 40%, Students 33%, School C 23%, School B 22%, School A 19% and School H 13%.

School G alone had no answers in these categories and it appears that this use of the outside delivery team was in students eyes much more effective than using teachers. However, School C where outsiders were also employed did not rate so highly, possibly reflecting the different composition of the teams in the two schools.

3. The curriculum students remembered having received

Results in Figs. x, xi, xii show what topics had, according to the respondents, been covered in sex education.

Figure x Curriculum remembered 1



Figure xi Curriculum remembered 2

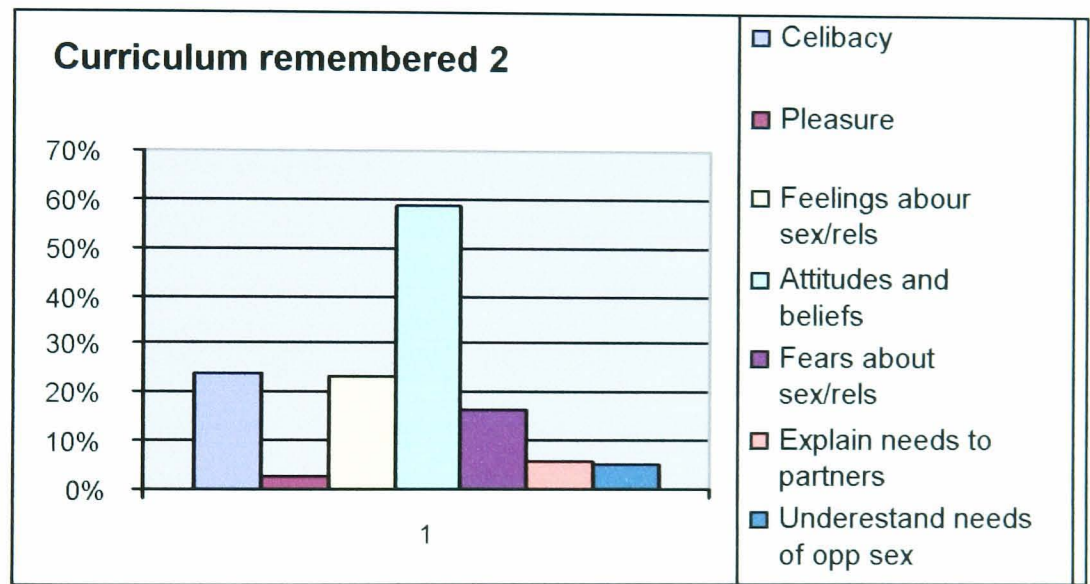
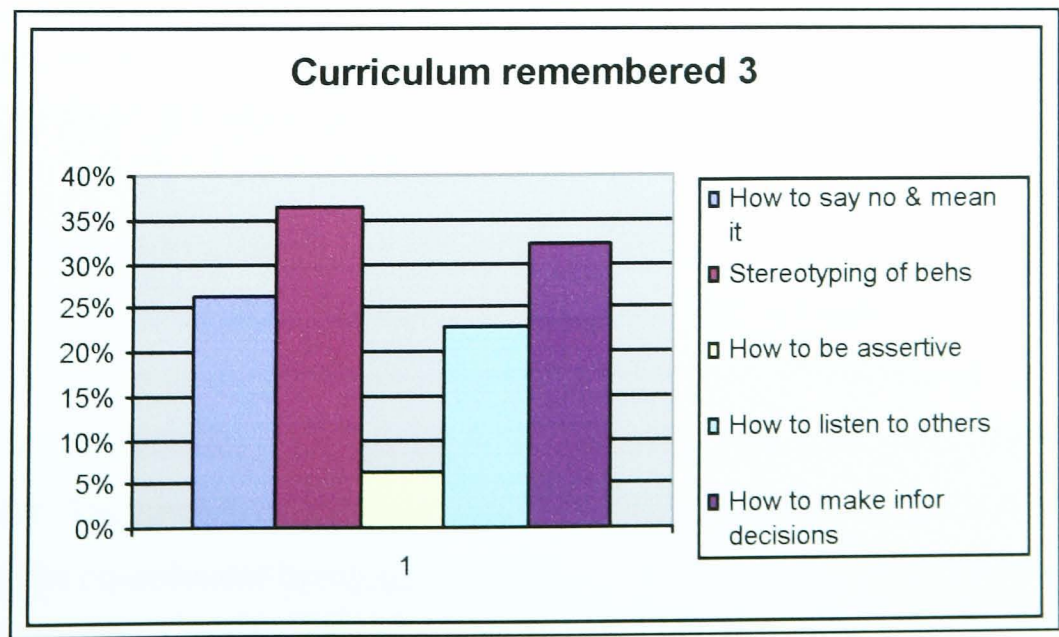


Figure xii Curriculum remembered 3



The topics covered showed a bias towards the functional biological facts rather than the much-needed area of opinions, feelings and skills in negotiating relationships (Fig.x). This echoes the knowledge-based National Curriculum rather than a curriculum founded on the desire to aid in every child's personal development. All respondents remembered being given facts on male body parts and almost all female body parts, School B alone having 2 students who failed to tick this option. However, parts of the body giving sexual pleasure gained a mere 12% response echoing Reiss's (1998) complaint over the lack of the representation of the clitoris in school text books. 86% of students remembered HIV and AIDS input but many subsequently complained over lack of information on other STIs. The age of consent for girls gained an overall 63%, but consent for homosexuals only 27% of the students remembered this being mentioned, with Schools E and F producing nil results. This reflects the concern of researchers such as Forrest (1998) and the Sex Education Forum (1996a).

Advice on contraception was patchy with only 51% recalling information on where to obtain contraceptives and 69% and 59% remembering advice on contraceptives and the chance to practice with condoms. This is particularly worrying given the concern over teenage pregnancy (Social Exclusion Unit, 1999). Indeed School B's co-ordinator mentioned not being able to afford condoms for one year group. When asked about wider content the responses of students showed a marked decline from their responses to questions about biological facts. Only 24% (Fig.xi) had discussed celibacy, though this is now at the forefront of the new Guidelines (DfEE 2000b). Two of the lowest scores came from Schools C, D and F (boys only) but School E (mixed) also recorded a lowly 20% and School G students (mixed) gave a 0% response to this question. This was echoed by the question on advice on how to say no and mean it; only 26% of respondents believing they had been given this information.

The highest positive response in this section was in the area of attitudes and beliefs about sexual relationships (Fig. xi) School A recording a 79.8% response. This correlated with the strong belief of the co-ordinator as to the importance of considering racial and religious differences in attitudes to sex. His role was that of Religious Studies and PSHE co-ordinator. The same high response came from School E (75%) possibly reflecting the setting, the co-ordinator being keen to acknowledge that the rural 'conservative' nature of the school influenced the provision of sex education. Worryingly only 5% of respondents (Fig.xi) recalled being taught how to understand the sexual needs of a partner and a mere

5% (Fig. xii) being deliberately taught how to be assertive. The highest response rate here for schools was from the boys only public school C (18.5%) but four schools gave a 0% responses (B, D, E, G). However, the university students returned a 17% response but this may have been influenced by factors such as the longer recall time and their greater maturity.

The skill of explaining one's own needs to a sexual partner also proved low, recording 6% overall (Fig.xi). School H and the university students giving the highest scores 13.8% and 12 %, whilst only 17% recalled having discussed fears about sexual relationships, School F recording a score of 0%. However, discussion of the stereotyping of behaviours towards particular genders (Fig.xii) was remembered by more respondents, 36% overall and was particularly strong in School G where the visiting team did all they could to combat gender stereotyping. The skill of listening to others (Fig. xii) received a response of 23% with School H recording a rate of 55% and School C 35%. Again there appeared to be no particular influence on what was taught other than the teacher involved. This had shown particularly with School C where many respondents had written the name of their health education course leader on the top of the questionnaires. It quickly became apparent that different leaders focused on different areas, reflecting the nature of this provision in that it is driven by student wishes. However, it also allowed some worrying gaps in input to develop. 32% of students believed that they had been taught to make informed decisions (Fig.xii), Schools H and A here returning the highest response rates and possessing co-ordinators whose belief in their subject area was noticeably stronger than in other schools. The nature of input and its reflection of National Curriculum demands were clear. The teaching on AIDs (Fig.xi) was consistently remembered echoing recent health department concerns. Clearly lacking here were the wider aspects of sexual pleasure and particularly worrying the lack of information on alternative sexualities. This echoed concern from PSHE co-ordinators about discussing homosexuality (only 27% of respondents believed this had been discussed, Fig. xi), the short time available for this subject in the yearly curriculum and teachers' lack of subject expertise.

4. Respondents' feelings during lessons

Students' feelings regarding their experiences of sex education (Fig.xiii) resulted in only 23% feeling that they were in a safe environment and could ask what questions they wished. Best here were School G, 50% (the outside team), who were determined to produce a climate in which students could ask any questions and School H.

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behaviour (69% of respondents saying lessons were disrupted). Certainly a great deal of potential learning time appears to be wasted.

5. How the lessons were conducted

Sexes separated – a good or bad strategy

In the mixed schools (A, B, E, G, H) sexes were not separated for lessons but the university students recorded that 8% of students from mixed schools had separate sex education classes, showing possibly a lessening, in recent years, of any tendency to separate the sexes. Students in mixed schools were fairly evenly divided in their opinions about separating the sexes for lessons.

Disruption of lessons

Disruption of classes appeared fairly common with 78% of respondents indicating that it had occurred. Boys it appears are the main culprits as indicated by Forrest (1998), Salisbury and Jackson (1996) and Davidson (1996), with girls recording a lowly 6% as perpetrators of disruption. There appeared to be no pattern between state and public schools here with School G (state) recording 100% responses for disruption and School C (public) 85%. The low response from School F (44%) could possibly be linked to how sex education is taught in that school, that is, only as biology. Interestingly School G's highest record of disruption could be attributed to the nature of the school itself. However, it could also be related to the use of the outside team who had no training in teaching and class control.

6. Preferences for the teacher

- Sex of the teacher
15% of the respondents would prefer a teacher of the same sex as themselves, whilst 18% wanted someone of the opposite sex with a large 68% expressing no preference.
- Overall preference ratings for teacher characteristics were similar across all respondents both school and university students.
The final ranking order for all responses was: -
First. The teacher is easy and comfortable, not embarrassed when giving information
Second. The teacher has a wide knowledge of the subject
Third. The teacher makes me comfortable as that I can ask what questions I wish
Fourth. The teacher listens to what people say
Fifth. The teacher keeps the class under control

Sixth. The teacher uses many different teaching methods not just talk.

- Preferences for a known teachers or teacher an outsider, or a mixture of the two.
23% preferred a teacher known to them, 19% an outsider but the overwhelming vote (58%) was for a mixture of both of these.
- The age of the teacher
30% thought this was important, led by School C with a 54% score but 55 % considered it not important with 15% 'Don't knows'.
- Preference for a young or a sympathetic teacher
If they had to choose 62% preferred empathy to youth, with 15% 'Don't knows'.

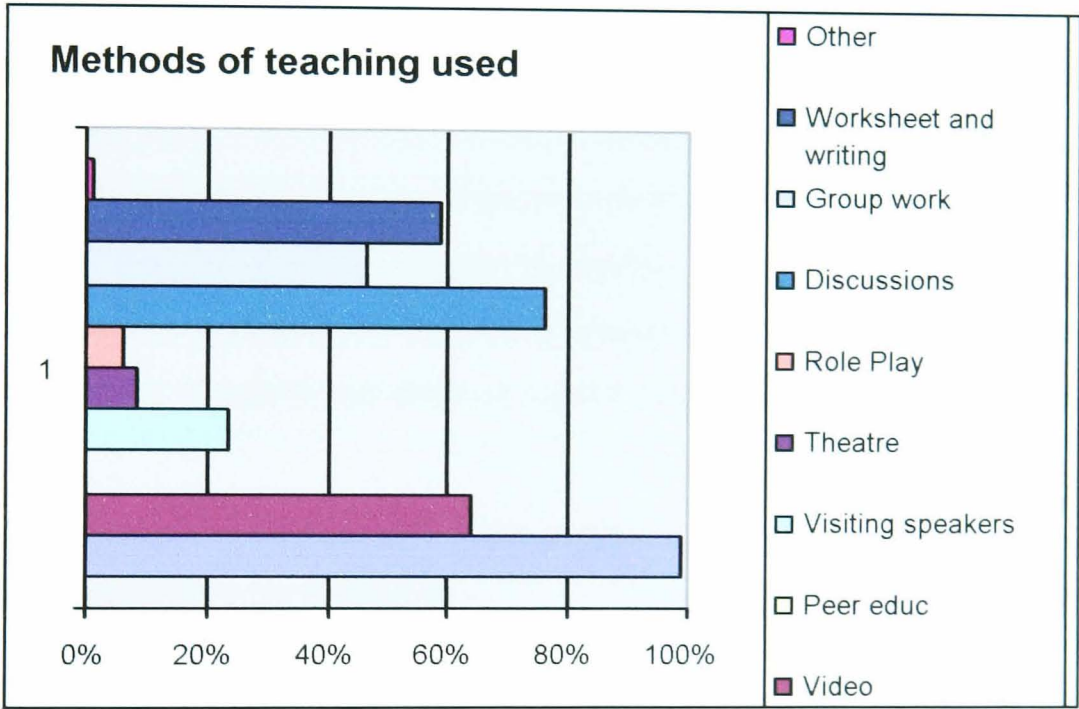
A large majority of the students was unconcerned as to the sex of the teacher working with then in this area. No preference had a 68% response whilst those requesting a same sex teacher was only 15% with slightly more girls than boys asking for this. Correspondingly slightly more boys than girls requested a teacher of the opposite sex. This goes against the beliefs of researchers such as Forrest (1998), Sex Education Forum (1996b), Salisbury and Jackson (1996). However, these responses could again have been conditioned by experience rather than need. Students are not used to being able to choose their teacher so this to some extent was a difficult question for them to answer rationally.

To some extent the sixth position 'uses many different teaching styles' was surprising as the focus groups (as we shall see) particularly requested less of the 'being talked at mode' and a more participatory structure. However, it became obvious that many students were much more used to this formal approach to lessons and had very little experience of more relaxed approaches (in particular Schools C, F, and to some extent A as the co-ordinator believed in an instructive approach). The close similarities of in the responses were somewhat surprising here, but unsurprising was the most popular choice of 'easy not embarrassed' and 'able to answer questions', a response echoed throughout the questionnaire. The main challenge here is producing teachers with the characteristics listed to work in this area. The low importance of class control in this preference list, coming fifth out of sixth contradicts other question results. However, it appears that the needs of the students for knowledge and empathy were rated more highly than merely keeping good discipline.

Preferences for known teachers or outsiders showed a large majority in favour of a mixture of outsider and familiar teacher. No particular different pattern of preferences occurred between girls and boys or state and public school pupils. The age of the teacher however, was more important to boys than girls; more boys in proportion requesting a young teacher. However, the vote for age being unimportant was 55 % as opposed to 30 % considering a young teacher preferable. Similarly, most students considered a sympathetic teacher more important than a young one, showing that empathy rather than age was desirable and echoing the responses of the focus groups.

7. Learning strategies employed

Figure xiv Methods of teaching used



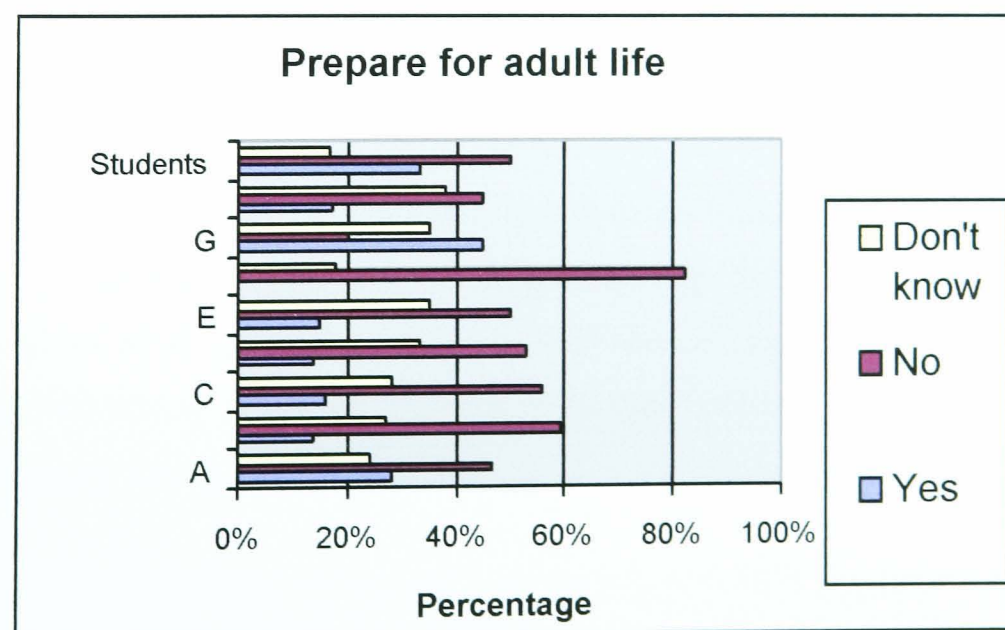
As displayed in Fig xiv 99% of all students recalled teachers talking and giving them information. Videos were also recalled by a 63%. Schools A and B scored highly here 82 and 92% and School E a score of 100%. School G alone gave a nil return, which to some extent therefore lowers the overall figure drastically. Peer education was only recalled by 5% of the students but did not appear to be used in any of the schools. Use of visiting speakers was patchy, overall 24%, but Schools B, D, E and F scored 0 whereas School G and H had high returns 85 and 76% respectively. Theatre was only recalled by a minute 1.5% of the students and not by any of those in schools. Role-play however, faired slightly better Schools B and H both scoring 14%. Discussions were a favoured technique 76% of respondents recalling their use, 100% in School G. Lowest result was for School F, 38% reflecting the formal methods of teaching employed. There was considerable use of group

work, only School F recording a nil result here. School H with 83% and School E with 95% led the way and the students recorded a score of 68%. Near the bottom was School D where only 14% recalled using groups. Interestingly only 59% of respondents recalled filling in worksheets and writing in sex education lessons though in three schools and from the students the results were in the 70% range. 1% of students mentioned other methods such as condom demonstrations.

The methods used to teach sex education were on the whole predictable and erred towards the traditional, teacher talk and information being top of the list. The overall picture was not therefore inspiring and echoed the responses from the PSHE co-ordinators which had intimated the lack of preparation time, low esteem in which the subject was held and the lack of staff training. Respondents pinpointed this in the ‘how to improve your sex education question’ requesting more active methods and for lessons to be more enjoyable. Again here there were hints that lessons were ineffective and not achieving their full potential due to the restricted nature of learning strategies employed. These results, to a great extent echoed the information given by teachers on learning methods employed, where sex education is taught and its content. However, not all the information teachers believed was being imparted had made an impact particularly contraception and STIs.

8. Sex education as a preparation for adult life

Figure xv Preparation for adult life



Only 20% of the respondents felt that the sex education they received prepared them for adult life, School F's students being particularly scornful recording 82% no's and 18% Don't knows. Many of the negative responses were in the 40% range.

The final response from students regarding whether sex education had prepared them for adult life gives a bleak picture. It does not appear that the sex education being delivered in schools at present will bring about the desired alteration in teenage pregnancy rates, or produce men who are more able to discuss their sexual needs, worries and behaviours. There appears to be a correlation here between learning experiences, methods used and these responses. Most positive were those from School G using the outside team with School F again showing the students' dissatisfaction with the concentration on the scientific aspects of sex using a formal approach. Overall students clearly showed that what is being taught and the way it is delivered to them in schools is not what they perceive they need as a preparation for sexual relationships in adulthood.

9. How to improve sex education - results from the questionnaires

a) Comments on existing provision.

Requests were made for more active approaches, more discussion. A teacher who 'doesn't talk too much' and 'things like role play not a teacher just telling you things'.

Students made many criticisms from all types of schools of courses that were too biologically based rather than dealing with feelings and emotions. Clear and more detailed information was requested especially about the use and availability of contraception and practical examples were asked for. A wider curriculum with teachers answering and responding to questions asked were suggested with one respondent advocating that 'teachers should not be so aggressive in the way they answer'. Delivery needed to be more interesting and 'not boring'. Input was considered by many as too little and too late (School A males particularly strong here).

b) How practice could be improved (m and f are used to note male and female requests).

There was some division here between suggestions from males and females but generally requests were similar. Numbers indicate the responses from each school.

Table 14 How sex education could be improved (f denotes a female respondent)

Suggestion	A	B	School Cm	Dm	E	Fm	G	H
More lessons		*14	*10	*16	*17	*4	*15	*3
Wider coverage particularly emotions and less biology.		*8	*12	*12	*8	*6	12	
More on relationships/emotions	*12	*15	*18		*4	*17		
More information on STIs	*12f	*12		*6		*12	*4	*6
Smaller group sizes		*6	*30					*6
More use of outside experts		*5	*4				*32	
Use of a continuous progressive approach from primary school through secondary school	*5	*6	*8	*7	*3	*12		
Teachers who were trained and Experienced in teaching about sexual matters and who can listen	*3f	*20	*5		*2	*8		
Make lessons more enjoyable			*24				*6	
Use more and more up to date material	*9			*12		*6		
More active learning and teaching approaches		*7					*15	*3
Less embarrassed more relaxed teachers	*5		*7	*4	*2f			*3f
Information on pornography		*3f					*10	
Separation of the sexes for all or some lessons	*7f						*4f	
More input on contraception			*6					*3f
Stop boys behaving badly	*3f				*4f		*2f	
Ability to ask teachers questions more easily			*2	*6				

Suggestions made by respondents (Table 11) fell into two general categories: how to improve the content of the curriculum and the learning situation/teaching. The most suggested action was for more input. The ‘too little too late’ message comes over strongly here. Many students requested greater input on STIs other than AIDs and the call for more emphasis on emotions, attitudes and behaviours was very strong linking with the answers on the curriculum already noted. Teaching styles received both overt and implied criticism with requests for lessons to be more ‘enjoyable’, use more active methods of learning coming from all sources. Smaller group sizes and the need to get all to make a contribution to lessons could be allied with the request from girls for separate lessons and to stop boys behaving badly. However, many boys from School B cited reduction in group size as a way of improving lessons seeing as did the girls, that large groups inhibited free discussion and tended to encourage bad behaviour. Striking here were the sensible suggestions coming from the respondents, they knew what needed to be done as regards methods of delivery, but were powerless to make things happen.

Suggestions came from individuals on how to improve things (boy from School C).

By cutting the crap and getting to the point. By not being reliant on typically produced mass literature. By feeling free to talk without

being worried about the 'correct' way of doing it. The whole process is at the moment so cliched and cheesy!

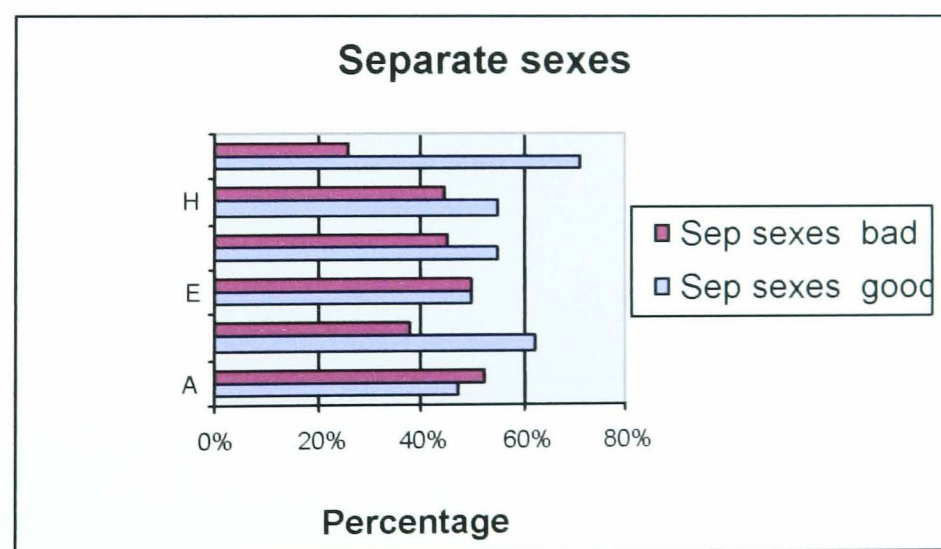
Another student suggested that

If some of the things in questions 8 and 9 were actually taught to us even those in question 7 would be better. (See Appendix 1)

On student asked for a more detailed look at long term relationship problems that could occur. One male student suggested that there should be more teachers with the skills mentioned specifically in Question 17 such as knowledge, skills in class control and use of alternative methods. In School G there was general satisfaction with the visiting team whilst the request from the boys in School F was that 'things should be taken more seriously by the masters' and the when asked about how to improve sex education the answer from one boy was 'teach us some'. Teachers here were perceived as 'patronising and biased'... 'they make little effort'. They should according to one correspondent 'make it more interesting and less embarrassing for the boys'. There appeared to be a general request from the state schools to lower group sizes.

10. Comments on separation of the sexes.

Figure xvi Separation of the sexes



Total in mixed schools who saw separation of the sexes as a good thing = 57%

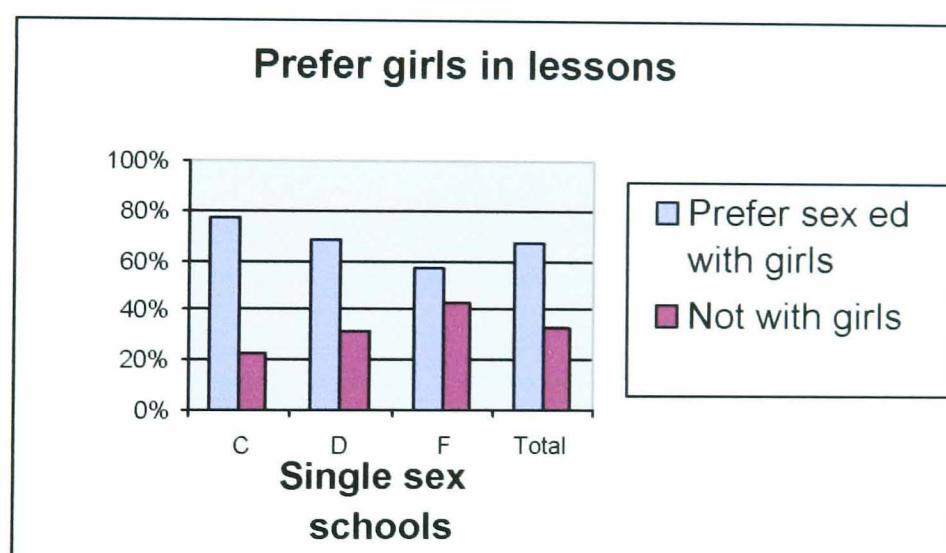
Total in mixed schools who saw separation of the sexes as a bad thing = 43%

Results here (Fig. xvi) echoed the general debate as to the usefulness or otherwise of single sex schooling. Cogent arguments were presented on both sides and possibly the answers

point to the use of mixed and single sex lessons so as to satisfy the varying needs of individuals as closely as possible.

Many students in the mixed schools believed that 'we need to be comfortable talking about sex in front of the other sex'. The most used reason given was 'it helps you to see both sides of the question'. Boys in single sex schools particularly thought this and that 'we need to know about each others' fears and worries' with 68% (Fig. xvii) or the inclusion of girls. 'Everyone needs to know everything' was a commonly used phrase and one girl suggested that separation creates a big gap in understanding. The need for confidence in expressing ideas and opinions was also given as a reason for inclusion. Occasionally one respondent would cite embarrassment and a fear of asking questions as a reason for separating the sexes and 2 males and 1 female suggested that the other sex did not need to know everything about their opposites. 'Girls don't need to know how to use condoms' (male) and 'boys don't need to discuss periods' (female). There was little difference between boys in

Figure xvii Preference for girls in lessons



single sex and co-educational settings regarding opinions as whether the sexes should be mixed. Girls did however, outnumber boys in requests, often giving their reasons as 'boys don't take it seriously they mess about'. One boy however (single sex school), thought that 'girls would stop boys messing about' and another boy suggested that talking would be easier if girls were present.

In schools B, G and H separation was considered a good idea by the majority, whilst in School A a small majority considered separation a bad idea. The university students however, had a much bigger split, 71% in favour and 26% against separation. In both

student groups females were more in favour of separation than males, the main reasons being boys' disruption of the classroom. Boys in single sex schools however, voted overwhelmingly 68% to 32% for the inclusion of girls in lessons. In School C where this practice had been tried and abandoned 78% were in favour, in School D 69% and in School F where some of the boys appeared afraid of girls 56%. Boys in single sex schools it appears crave the company of girls so as to receive a more rounded picture. However, these reactions came from the basis of students' experiences and were conditioned by them. Boys in schools C, D and F had not had any experience of girls in lessons. Respondents in the mixed schools had no experience of single sex lessons, so were making judgements based on speculation rather than fact. Reactions of the boys in the focus groups contradicted what was said here. They clearly demonstrated the need for some separation of the sexes to occur, in order to give boys more time to express feelings and to work through the 'macho' behaviours so deplored by Forrest (1998) and Salisbury and Jackson (1996).

11. Comparison of responses

There was considerable disparity between the schools' and students' responses. School F appeared to have the most negative responses overall with sex education existing only in science and in the opinion of the boys, taught with too great a reference to religious opinions. As a result of this narrow focus the curriculum delivered appeared to be very limited with very low responses in many cases, for example use of contraceptives, ages of consent, sexual pleasure, attitudes, fears and relationships with others. These boys also recorded some of the highest results for feeling uncomfortable, embarrassed, feeling that friends would laugh at them and gave the next to lowest rating for believing they were in a safe environment. Teacher embarrassment did seem to be more of a problem in mixed schools, possibly related to male teachers working with females and vice versa. School F also had the lowest record of class disruption possibly caused by low class sizes, the general discipline in the school and the scientific approach to the subject. However there was an 82% no response to the question on preparation for adult life.

School E also recorded fairly poor results, sex education being delivered in science and form time. The PSHE teaching team here was based on form tutors, as the co-ordinator believed that familiar teachers were best for this subject area. This did not appear to work, as there was a high result for class embarrassment, (70% of the respondents). Also 99% of the students here cited disruption of lessons as a problem, so the familiar teacher approach did not seem to be working. This school like School F used a limited methodological

approach to the subject with nil responses to the more active methods of delivery. There was a fifty fifty split on whether boys and girls should be separated for lessons showing a difference from the other mixed schools who all showed at least a 10% positive response to this question and in the case of the students an overwhelming 45%. This could be because they come from an older age group and for more recent students co-education is seen as the norm.

Schools C and F, the public boarding schools, recorded the highest preference for young teachers rating it more important than did students in the state schools. The curriculum in School C and the general approach to sex education received better responses from the boys than did those in School F. The more active, discussion based approach was evident, reflecting the design of the course by the PSHE co-ordinator, with a wider teaching method base and more concentration on attitudes and feelings.

Schools G and H received the most positive responses for the respondents, reflecting the use of the outside team in G and the dedicated enthusiasm of the co-ordinator in School H. The latter also had the widest curriculum recalled by students with more of a concentration on feelings, attitudes and beliefs than elsewhere. The curriculum for School G however, showed the limitations of employing outsiders for short periods of time, as several important aspects did not appear to have even been touched on, for example, celibacy, pleasure, being assertive, fears and understanding the needs of the opposite sex. In School H the PSHE co-ordinator had recorded her disquiet at having to use some, in her opinion, inappropriate members of staff, who were unable to use active learning methods.

Overall the responses from students and schools were similar, showing few changes in recent years. In some cases the students' responses were more positive regarding what they had been taught than those given by the school pupils. However, this could have been the effect of the time lapse and confusion about what had been taught in school or learned elsewhere.

The strongest tendency from all the results was the demonstration of the diversity of experiences students receive. There appears to be a lottery operating dependent on the individual schools, their ethos, staff beliefs, headteachers' attitudes and the availability of outside support. School B is an example here, where poor scores reflected the despair of the co-ordinator and the low morale and status of the school in general. The high request

from students here for smaller groups, was obviously a result of the ad hoc timetable and staffing arrangements. School D, where the co-ordinator had herself taken on the task of all sex education delivery in PSHE and School A where the somewhat unusual viewpoint of the co-ordinator demonstrated how individuals could influence teaching and curricular. Enthusiasm and commitment were evident in results from schools A, C, D, G and H. However, strong beliefs could also effect what was on offer to students, as in School F and A, where students asked for a wider curriculum.

12. Questionnaire findings conclusions

The overwhelming impression gained from these responses is the diversity and ad hoc nature of sex education being delivered in schools. There was little consistency either in approach or what is taught. Teachers' lack of preparedness is also an ongoing theme. However, the strong message here was that students know what they want from sex education lessons, the kind of teachers they prefer and how they want to be taught. Themes that came over strongly were: -

- More time, more lessons and to start younger
- Smaller group sizes
- Teachers who are not embarrassed and who can control classes
- Teachers who have empathy and are prepared to listen and to answer questions
- Teachers who make lessons interesting and have the requisite knowledge
- Use of both familiar teachers and outsiders
- More emphasis on emotions, feelings and behaviours (boys want to know how girls' think)
- More emphasis on relationships and less biology
- More information on STIs not just AIDs
- More information and chance to practice with contraceptives

Pornography and masturbation received little mention by the respondents though authors believe that these elements are essential for good sex education. Some boys from the public schools did suggest pornography as a discussion point but masturbation was not mentioned by any respondent, a sign of the still taboo nature of this aspect of sex education.

Chapter 7 Focus Group Interviews: the Results

The three boys' focus group interviews conducted were analysed and collated so as to produce a single result. All quotations are from the boys. The boys were questioned on their sex education, where, when and how it had been taught, including content, teaching methods and ways sex education could be improved.

1. Preference for single sex or mixed sex lessons for sex education

The boys were divided. Some thought it was better to have girls in the class as girls prevent boys being so competitive and that there is more chance of ridicule 'taking the mick' in a single sex environment. Some thought that it was necessary to talk with and listen to girls in order to 'find out what they think' and 'what it's like to be a girl'. Some boys (mainly those from the single sex schools) thought having girls in the room would make them too embarrassed to ask questions or to talk freely and that the girls might be similarly inhibited and that single sex lessons were best.

Asked then if some lessons alone and some with girls would be good they all responded positively. Talks alone first to enable them to discuss 'male' issues followed by groups in which girls were present was generally agreed as the best solution. On being asked how they could be helped to communicate better with girls one boy's answer was 'send us to a mixed school'.

2. What they want included in sex lessons

(i) *About 'being a girl, what it's like'*. Information (from girls themselves) about periods and PMT was essential 'so we can be more understanding'. The only input they had come from biology which was 'just about bodies' and also from sisters, mothers and dates who occasionally talked about these things. One boy described asking a girl who 'wasn't feeling well, what was the matter' and having periods described to him in clear detail thought it 'sounded horrible' and made him 'really sympathetic'.

Many thought much more work should be done on feelings which are not really covered at present. What it is like to 'fall in love' and when discussing such things they should not be 'put down' by adults or told 'it's just a crush'. They want to know 'how to give a woman

pleasure' and to be sure 'it didn't hurt them the first time'. There was a much discussion of this. The importance of getting boys to talk about feelings and emotions was continually stressed as they admitted that girls 'talk to each other about feelings and stuff' but that boys did not. This, they believed, was because girls were closer to their friends but was also due to stereotyping of which they were very aware. They discussed the pressure on boys to be 'more closed', 'not to talk about what worries or frightens them but laugh it off'. The male reaction of turning to violence 'when I'm upset I want to hit something' and 'I kicked in the toaster last time I got stressed' was mentioned. Also the need to help boys discuss matters such as this openly and for them to be given strategies for coping was essential. They all agreed that they might talk to a close friend about, but not all, emotional problems, one boy saying he would be 'tempted to run away' if his best friend cried in front of him, with the others nodding agreement.

(ii) *Homosexuality*. Some thought that it was essential it should be covered, but the discussion brought general embarrassment. They generally only discuss this 'as a joke'. Lesbians they think are treated much more kindly by their own sex than are gay men and that open discussion was essential to stop bullying and name-calling. Several boys, however, were against any discussion of homosexuality as it was 'wrong' as 'God said so'. When asked if all people were religious and had the same point of view they answered that they had been taught that in school and their parents agreed (this was a school with a Christian basis to their teaching). One boy, from an ethnic minority raised the question of the difficulties his parents had with homosexuality in that 'they had never heard of it before they came here' and were 'confused and couldn't talk about it' to him. He firmly believed that all types of sexuality should be discussed in school and many of the boys agreed with this.

The main point here was the reaction of the boys when homosexuality was mentioned. They were worried and embarrassed, some giggling occurred and eye contact was suddenly difficult to make. It was obvious that this was a very difficult subject for them. Asked what they would do if their best friend told them he was gay the general consensus was to 'run a mile'.

(iii) *How to withstand peer pressure and make their own decisions was considered very important*. They acknowledged the importance of peer pressure especially during mid teens but wanted to be given the tools to resist it. Decision making they therefore saw as

very important, they wanted to be given the things to say, the information which would help them say no and resist peer pressure. It was important they believed to be given/shown all their options so that they could choose.

(iv) *Pornography* was also mentioned. They knew that you could get it 'on the net' and there was general discussion of boys who had been suspended for bringing 'dirty magazines' into school. It does appear to be an area not discussed but of which they are highly aware.

(v) *AIDs and HIV infection* were raised. They wanted more information on how you catch it and more open discussion rather than facts in biology. Information on other STIs was also requested. Many boys thought this area had been neglected.

(vi) *Information was requested on abortion*. The boys from the Christian based school were adamant that with this and other topics they wanted a 'balanced view', hearing both sides of the question.

(vii) *Contraception* was high on the list of requests with 'hands on practical' not just information (this from boys from one school where the subject was only approached in biology from a theoretical standpoint). Very few of the boys had ever seen what a packet of birth control pills looked like or had heard of the 'morning after' pill and all thought they should be fully informed about this.

(viii) *Masturbation* was not mentioned and when asked if this should be included reactions were mixed. One boy said definitely not as it 'was wrong and dirty'. Asked how he knew this he said 'the Bible says so'. Other boys thought it should be discussed and had not been mentioned in their lessons. There was a great deal of embarrassment here. This raised the problem of conflicts between what is taught at home and what at school and some thought that this was 'too personal a subject' for general discussion and that it might cause boys to 'go against their home teachings and religious beliefs'. Others thought that they should hear all sides of the argument and be left to make up their own minds. They acknowledged that girls and boys both masturbate but there was no true agreement here. It appeared that some boys did not want to express an opinion against the accepted view, especially in the school with a Christian basis.

Most boys believed that a moral element was important in sex education, though they acknowledged the difficulties with this, as society has no single set of morals.

3. The culture amongst boys in the schools

This was in all cases seen as competitive with a great deal of boasting and jealousy apparent. When asked if they would say, in front of others, that they had experience of sex even if this was untrue, most admitted that they would do so. One boy stressed the homophobic nature of the school (a boarding school) and said he believed this culture less likely in mixed schools. The boys admitted that it was difficult to admit that they did not know something. There was a great deal of boasting and they wanted to look good in front of 'our mates'. It was they believed very important to fit into the school culture though peer pressure lessened in the sixth form, it was very strong around the age of fourteen. They believed that this needed to be addressed and that boys needed help to 'get through it'. There appeared to be little understanding of how a teacher could create a 'safe environment' in which to address sensitive subjects. They appeared to have little experience of this.

4 How they want to be taught

Small groups were considered best. The state school classes of 30 were considered 'too big' and gave 'too much chance for people to muck about and spoil it'. In this kind of atmosphere they believed many boys are inhibited and would not ask questions for fear of ridicule. The boarding school boys generally approved of the size of their tutor groups, which was around twelve to fifteen and this seemed to be an acceptable number. Both groups raised the issue of one-to-one advice wanting 'somebody we can trust'. This was seen as something that would help boys to talk about things important to them in safety. The boarding school had a counsellor who came in once a week but this was considered 'not enough' and 'anyway she's always here at the wrong time'. They appeared to want instant access to this 'trustworthy' person when problems arose. Some boys did not like the idea of a stranger and would have preferred a teacher for this one-to-one advice. There was disagreement over this point, but many liked the idea of a school counsellor.

Good clear explanations of the facts were desired because 'boys are just supposed to know this sex stuff, just like driving'. They wanted to be told 'how to do it'.

All expressed a desire to be helped to talk about their feelings because when they were hurting they bottled it up and in some cases could not even talk to a close friend or if someone tried to confide in them they 'run away'. A safe environment was wanted with no 'messing about allowed' and 'no ribbing or 'taking the piss'.

There was a general feeling that parenting education may be a 'good thing' but it might 'make you think you know it all so you go ahead too early'. However, they thought budgeting and caring for a family with the responsibilities it brings was a good idea. One group decided that sex education alone was not enough and that 'its really social education we need, the whole stuff together'

One boy firmly believed that the law regarding the age of consent, child abuse and the rights of children should be covered.

5. The Ideal Teacher

There was a great deal of animated discussion about this and no real consensus over some topics. However, there was general agreement that they wanted someone they could trust (one boy said he would never trust a teacher because they 'gossip about the kids in the staff room'). They also agreed that teachers should not be embarrassed by anything discussed, they recounted tales of teachers who were embarrassed and used sarcasm to 'cover up'. All agreed that they did not want 'senior staff, the kind that discipline you' (year head, deputies) but classroom teachers to teach this area of the curriculum. All the boys wanted 'someone with a sense of humour' who could 'handle the class' and knew the subject really well 'sex is in your face - its okay if a history teacher doesn't know but not with this stuff'. Teachers should not be boring with a 'droning voice' or someone who 'waffles on for ages and doesn't give us a chance to talk' but interesting and approachable.

Include them in the lessons not 'just tell' 'help us make decisions right for us'.

They disagreed on the importance of age. Most wanted someone 25-30 who would be more 'in tune' with their feelings not 'someone pushing sixty who lies back and thinks of England sort of stuff'. A man was preferred by some, because he would be able to talk about 'man things', 'it's easier to talk to a man' but others disagreed and thought that empathy was much more important than gender.

On being questioned why they were talking so freely and easily to an older female researcher this caused a great deal of interest and the general consensus was that 'you're not bothered by anything not shocked' 'you're experienced, 'you've heard it all before' 'you're interested in what we say' 'you're an expert in the subject,' 'nothing we say would phase you', 'we know you will keep this confidential because you promised you would'. One said it was because he 'knew me' which was interesting, as I had only visited the school once before to give out the questionnaires to the lower sixth of which he was a member. The short talk given must have made me seem familiar to him and therefore as he put it 'not a stranger'.

This activated discussion as to whether an outsider or a familiar teacher was preferred. Some wanted an outsider because of the confidentiality; others would prefer familiar teachers. On asked if a combination of both was a good idea all agreed that this was the best option. It was decided that the outsiders might be better at discussing attitudes, feelings, relationships and sexual behaviour with the insider giving the facts, because the outsider 'might be better trained'. It was finally agreed by all groups that in an ideal scenario it would be good to have both male and female teachers to get 'both sides of the question'.

There was agreement that some teachers could cope better than others with delivering sex education. In particular English and History teachers were mentioned as having the expertise to use methods of teaching that would be good for delivering this type of material, that is active methods that involved the boys. Maths teachers it was universally agree 'couldn't cope' and 'they'd be dreadful' or 'are dreadful'.

Confidentiality and trust were raised on many occasions and thought of as essential for successful lessons. Trust in the teacher was very important and was one of the reasons why some boys wanted outsiders to teach them. However, the teacher had to be approachable and some were worried that outsiders would not gain their trust. There was a general consensus that staff talk about the boys in the staff room and this could include personal information or comments they had made in sex education lessons. The importance of a safe environment in which this material could be taught was evident and the need to include the pupils in what was going on and not merely tell them things but address their problems and queries was stressed.

6. Should teachers be trained specifically for sex education /PSHE?

All the boys considered training essential and were astonished to find that, in many schools, teachers had received no training in this curriculum area. There was disagreement as to whether all teachers should have this training or some PSHE specialist should be employed and a team of trained people used to deliver the material. Some thought that a PSHE teacher would not establish a relationship with the class and that they should 'teach another subject as well'. It was generally agreed that PSHE has no particular standing in schools and that a PSHE teacher would not get much respect. Asked how this could be altered they all agreed that the only way to do this would be to make PSHE an assessed subject but no one wanted to be assessed in this subject.

7. Methodologies to use

One boy found the question of 'how do you want to be taught' very difficult to address. When asked why he admitted that 'no-one has ever asked me this sort of thing before, its weird'. On being asked if it was a good idea to ask pupils how they want to be taught he decided it was a very good thing, though he was having difficulty in 'getting my head round it'.

There was a general dislike of filling in worksheets. The boys wanted active sessions, well controlled, where teachers made the topic interesting and relevant to them. They wanted bad behaviour stamped out and a safe environment created where boys could openly discuss matters that concerned them. They recognised the difficulties of this and thought the anonymous question box a good idea, though some thought that teachers would recognise handwriting anyway.

Videos (not too long) were liked especially to give information and start discussions. Information given from a neutral standpoint was important they believed. There were comments such as 'it depends on the age group', 'they can just make you laugh', and 'fourteen year olds could just finish up looking at a pair of breasts and not hearing what's been said'. Some videos were considered boring 'talking is much better'. Best it was considered is to use a short amount of video and then talk about it. Discussions, if well controlled, were highly rated so you can 'learn from others'.

Peer teaching involving them working with younger boys was considered 'scary' as they believed 'they'd laugh at us and would 'muck about'. When training to do this was

suggested and the success of such schemes pointed out some reluctantly agreed it might be 'worth a try'. One boy did volunteer that he had been helping with reading with year 7 boys who were behind and that it had been very successful and that the younger boys had 'looked up' to him. There was a general fear of this idea though one boy believed that 'younger boys might find it easier to talk to us. We're closer to them than the teachers'

Role-play was to some extent considered babyish and that the only way to make it work would be to use girls. However, the presence of girls was not possible in the single sex schools. They believed boys acting as girls would 'get laughed at' but agreed that a scenario of girls' and boys' reactions could be used to make them think about attitudes and feelings of the two sexes.

None of the boys had experienced theatre sessions but thought it possibly a good idea, especially to begin discussion. Virtual reality dolls were also new to most of them and they thought that most boys would not take them seriously, though several of them had seen them on television soaps. One boy thought he would like to 'have a go'. There was some support for parenting education so long as it was not 'over the top so we think we know it all and can be parents at fourteen'. Even greater was support for one boy's suggestion that their parents should come to school for lessons to help them learn how to answer their children's' questions.

8. When should sex education begin?

There was much discussion about this. Some boys thought that starting too early would encourage experimentation as 'we'd think we knew it all' but most wanted a rolling programme starting at a young age which would help children to accept this as a natural part of education and of life. They thought that the wider aspects could be started at Year 7 in secondary school, such as relationships and bullying and then move onto more personal aspects.

9. Evaluating the programme

Suggestions such as some form of quiz at the end to see if information had been absorbed was considered a possible idea and that they should be given a chance to feedback and evaluate the lessons they had attended. They recognised the problem that pupils did not perceive unassessed work as valuable. One boy suggested that if you had to get a good grade in PSHE to get into university all his friends would take the subject seriously.

In general the boys expressed clear views on their needs. Some ambiguities and disagreements did occur but they were happy with the general conclusions drawn and the chance to have their opinions taken into account.

Chapter 8 The Alternative Methodologies Results

These results are recorded in some detail in order to demonstrate the underlying perspectives and underpinning educational values relating to the alternative methodologies.

Student Tutors: Results from Interviews, Focus Groups and Observations

This research was carried out in Prague where the student tutoring of sex and relationships education takes place. Interviews were conducted with the university tutor whose scheme this was, a student tutor in a school setting, a Minister for Education and an educational psychologist familiar with the scheme and working in Prague schools. A focus group was conducted with eight of the student tutors. Pupils from a Prague school were also observed interacting with the student tutor and photographic evidence examined and the whole evidence collated.

Sex education in the Czech Republic was formally for 12-16 year olds twice a year. The university academic running the student tutor scheme did not believe this was adequate and with government support attempted to prepare students to work in schools with pupils aged from 6-16. The theme was sex and relationships education and covered a wide brief, not merely biology.

Areas covered include: -

Adolescence - identity formation and responsibility.

Family and partnership relations.

Development of personality and the stages of development from child to adult with the concentration on becoming a good partner.

Family function, adaptation to family life and divorce.

Time spent on sex and relationship education varies between schools. In some schools this amounts to 1-2 hours in a week, though this is a rarity. In other schools four visits by the student tutors, each of three hours, for each year group is allowed. The scheme adapts to the schools' demands and takes whatever time is offered, aiming for continuity and progression where possible, students returning to the school each year. However, not all schools use all parts of the programme. The student tutors work in pairs in the schools in Prague and the surrounding area and the government funds the scheme. The student tutors are volunteers from the university and are either intending to be teachers or are psychology

students who want to work as educational psychologists in the future. Students can elect to do student tutoring as part of their course and it is accredited. Some students, after graduation, go to work in the schools whilst working towards a Masters degree. They carry on with the personal relationships work during school lessons and also act as what is described as 'the school godmother' or counsellor, making themselves available for individual consultations when required by the children, either in lesson time or at lunchtimes or during the afternoon when the school is used as a club.

The tutors are prepared by a series of lectures (30-40) on content knowledge and how to teach it. These are taken by a variety of lecturers and the course leader believes that the quality is at times variable. The idea is to prepare students to work with all year groups. The whole theme of sex and relationships education is covered including, contraception, sexual techniques, deviation, illness, drug problems, assertiveness in making contacts, feelings, friendship and love, difference, speaking about potential parenthood, relationships between partners, love and parenting. At the time of the visit 35 themes had been thoroughly prepared including much material being put onto CD Rom and in all 56 different themes were planned, intended to be a whole school programme. Sex and relationships education is compulsory in the Czech Republic since the revolution, but the government do not specify the content of what has to be taught and similar problems arise with provision in religious schools as in England, namely a conflict between religious teachings and what secular provision wishes to provide. The whole programme starts from a familiar theme, which is considered essential as it allows the children to relate this education to their everyday lives. The first theme is families and food preparation. This is considered essential by the student tutors' leader a preparation for family life, particularly important for boys, as 'in the Czech Republic men still expect women to do all the household chores'. This is causing family rifts and needs, she believes, to be tackled. Psychologists working in government organisations are expected to go into schools and they join the training programme, as do some teachers as in-service provision. The tutors in conjunction with the school decide the curriculum delivered. Biology is only incidental and the basis of the work is on relationships and feelings. The tutors start with games or activities before getting to the discussion of feelings. Boys, it appears, favour this approach and it is important that the tutors have a flexible approach, as often the boys want to decide the agenda and not keep to a set lesson. The importance of one to one work was stressed and methods such as making models of males and females in order to start a discussion on

feelings was described. There is too a strong element of progression and a belief in starting from a young age.

The class sizes are 25 or more and all classes in the country are of mixed sex. The student tutors found working in the religious schools more difficult than in state schools. In all schools they had, on occasions, met problems with staff and pupils. Some staff resented their presence and treated them as untrained usurpers with no right to 'tell them how to teach'. Others were welcoming however, grateful for having this difficult area of the curriculum taken from them. School principals were pleased to welcome the students, but class teachers did not always reflect this attitude. Resentment and being thought of as 'untrained', tutors found difficult, especially as they had all received training in content and pedagogy before going into the schools and very few of the teachers they encountered had any training in the area. Some teachers were considered by the student tutors as inadequate in this area of the curriculum, the university tutor naming teachers of maths, physics and English as the ones least qualified to teach sex education. This partly echoes the opinions of the boys in the English focus groups. In most cases she believed, and this was supported by student opinion, they could not cope with the active teaching methods required by this subject and for which the student tutors were trained. Teaching in the Czech Republic is on the whole didactic and the student tutors use of theatre, discussion groups, videos, games and activities was novel. The tutors did have a problem in some schools of being accepted by the children as a 'real teacher' and on occasions found discipline difficult. They were helped by the fact that they were part of a pair and had a peer for support. Recent changes in teacher education in the country have resulted in teachers being trained in health education as a specialism in order to prepare them for teaching personal and social education topics.

There was disagreement between the university tutor and the students who delivered the programme on whether groups should be mixed or of separate genders. The university tutor was a strong believer in teaching boys and girls together at all times, so 'they can understand the other point of view and get used to discussing these topics'. She admitted that there could be problems caused by the different maturity of boys and girls and pointed to the added problem of the feminisation of the teaching profession, similar to the position in England. Boys, she believed, lacked role models in school. All parties, including the educational psychologist, agreed that in the Czech Republic education is highly valued as an escape from drudgery and boring jobs, so there is an incentive to work hard. The

interviewee working in a school though had a different opinion. She would have preferred to separate boys and girls for some of the time as she believed that the 'boys need longer to be able to discuss these subjects'. She believed that it was important with boys to start with the familiar and concrete facts to ease them into the more difficult areas of feelings and emotions. The other tutors generally agreed though acknowledging that in the Czech Republic mixed gender teaching was the norm. One student proposed separating boys for the basic facts then bringing the group together to discuss. The students believed that separation during the tutoring would help prevent embarrassment, particularly if the boys had a male tutor and the girls a female one. They also stressed the need to begin with easier topics and that 'before you teach sex you have to start with something else'.

Their tutor strongly disagreed, believing that separation of the sexes would lead to a widening of the gap between them and the viewpoints of both sexes needed to be heard. She did suggest that on occasions, separating sexes in the same room for a short time, could be useful for discussion purposes, but believed separate sex sessions were used by teachers who 'are not so good'.

Some of the tutors and the educational psychologist believed that boys took longer to lower their defences but that when they relaxed, their analysis of the subject went deeper than that of the girls, so if the groups were mixed this could help the girls. The need to help boys go behind their image and admit to having problems was agreed by all. One of the students strongly disagreed with the idea of mixed groups and spoke of her experience of boys being very embarrassed to discuss problems in front of girls. In Sweden where she had worked it was common to use the same sex of teacher initially to help the different sexes relax and discuss openly. One male student believed that starting lessons together followed by separate sessions, then coming together again was the answer. The university tutor pointed to the problems of using different language when talking to the different sexes when separation was common and that this would not create a common language for them to discuss their feelings.

The sex of the teacher was considered less important than the methods used. One person thought that men found it difficult to talk to men about feelings and emotions and that possibly a woman was better for teaching boys. Some thought older teachers found it very difficult to talk about sexual matters, whilst others believed it was more to do with the type of person not the age. There was some agreement that young people prefer a familiar

teacher to an outsider and they believed that they fitted into that category, so there was continuity of provision.

All agreed that young people need teachers who know the subject well and how to deliver it and that in the Czech Republic most teachers did not. They all believed that one of the strengths of the student tutoring system was that the tutors were all specially trained and wanted to be involved in the work. That was, they asserted, why student tutoring had been so successful. The need for specially trained teachers, who were not mathematicians or scientists, was stressed and some of the tutors thought that the older children valued someone they saw as an expert, though the younger ones preferred familiar teachers. One big bonus of the student tutors, they believed, was that the pupils trusted them to keep things confidential.

The school pupils appeared to respond well to the work of the student tutor. The rapport between tutor and tutees was evident and the atmosphere was relaxed. The young people appeared to trust their tutor and were happy to ask questions and to discuss points with each other. It was also evident that the one-to-one provision was well used, pupils coming with individual questions to the tutor. There was on this occasion a far higher percentage of boys than girls. When questioned if this was the norm, the student tutor said that both sexes valued the one-to-one opportunity, but that boys in particular used this facility. She believed it was because boys found it harder to talk about feelings and needed the extra time and attention that one-to-one sessions provided.

Results from peer education programme

The results here are from the research carried out on the peer education programme running in the West Country. The team leader, from the University, was interviewed and two classes observed in local schools. A university team runs this programme with support from local health authority professionals. Curriculum support is given to secondary schools in years seven and eight developing work from National Curriculum KS3 science. The whole approach is based on social learning theory, accurate factual knowledge being seen as an important but not critical component, the main thrust being on helping students practise skills by discussing and performing role-plays. This, the team believes, will enable the young people to change beliefs and empower them in behavioural terms. The scheme has been running for ten years and has involved control schools as well as those taking part in the project and has now spread to several parts of the country. In brief, the programme

attempts to provide a progressive schedule starting in years seven and eight with human development, delivered by the school, followed in year nine by three sessions from the visiting team using case studies, followed by four peer led sessions on risk-taking and peer pressure. Then, in year ten further visiting team sessions on STIs, contraception and social norms and responsibilities. In year eleven an evaluation questionnaire is issued to feed into the project's annual report

Some problems have occurred, in particular with school nurses who, despite training on some occasions, 'tend to be sexist, all doctors are he' (Team leader) and with the school staff not getting involved but sitting marking during the lesson. Results have been very positive for the peer led sessions and the volunteers see it as 'something to put on their UCAS forms that makes them stand out'.

Measor et al. (1996) in their study of single sex education classes employed a qualitative style of research based purely on observation of the behaviour of boys and girls. They noted that in observing reactions to single sex education on sexual matters the behaviour of boys was a problem. They were unsure if the negative reactions of boys was due to the subject matter or if this was normal 'boy' behaviour in school lessons. They found that the poor behaviour of boys also occurred in mixed classes when the subject was sex education, but do not appear to speculate on the fact that the use of health service professionals rather than experienced teachers may have been some influence on the boys' poor behaviour. Certainly in the West Country observations of the class taken by outside professionals made by this researcher, the boys' behaviour was markedly different to that of the girls who were similar to Measor et al.'s (1996:277) description of 'a picture of conformity'. Note was made here of the behaviours of the pupils involved in the lesson.

Miller and MacGilchrist (1996) describe peer teaching as only one aspect of peer-led work. They believe that the goal is not to change behaviour but to 'focus on the thinking feeling components of learning' and that there are benefits for both tutor and tutee. They describe work in the USA specifically aimed at young people based on social learning theory and the need to have role models. They believe that peer education requires a different approach from classroom teaching, as its aim is not merely to inform but to empower. This is certainly true of the peer-led sex education project in the West Country. The aim here is to give young people role models that help them explore a variety of ways of coping with peer pressure and resisting early sexual intercourse. Describing peer-led work on HIV and

AIDs education Miller and MacGilchrist (1996) point to the fact that participants leading the peer work were volunteers. This was the case too in the sex education peer-led work in the West Country, as the organisers thought it important that only volunteers should be used and that they should be well trained by adults before proceeding.

Certainly the responses of the peer educators, the sixth form volunteers, in this research was positive and they were looking forward to alluding to this work on university entrance forms, as they saw it as setting them apart from other candidates for university entrance. They came from a variety of subject disciplines within the school and had been able to meet together to plan work and input fairly easily. Work for the project was also continuing using students from further education colleges visiting schools without sixth forms, to do similar sessions to the one observed. However, there had been drawbacks in that these students were not familiar with the schools and the year 10 groups did not know them as school members and therefore did not really perceive them as peers

Interview with a team leader

The leader stressed that he believed that mixed groups were essential, as separating boys and girls 'gives them a chance to be sexist' and allows boys the opportunity to 'make stupid remarks they can't do in front of the girls'. The team always tries to provide a mixed sex pair to deliver the material to the mixed groups to achieve a balanced approach. He believes we need to help boys to talk about sex using acceptable language for example 'breasts not tits' so they can be helped to discuss 'difficult things in an acceptable way'. He sees this as 'training for life' and that it is essential to help boys 'stop laddish behaviour'.

Training and feedback is essential; the team always asks students to evaluate what they do. The feedback has shown them that 'kids want someone they know and trust to teach them but someone with knowledge and street cred' (that is trained). He believes therefore, that in reality a trained teacher is better than an outsider, but that teachers do not have the requisite training.

The feedback shows that boys gain more from this approach than do girls, the reason being, he believes, the boys 'start from a much lower knowledge base', and are much more strongly influenced by 'peer group norms of behaviour' than are girls. The team workers firmly believe that adults giving factual information and peers (sixth formers) working on

changing attitudes and empowering young people is the best approach. They believe it is essential to have well trained staff and that the peer educators used in years nine or ten also have received intensive training. Therefore, staff from the team work in pairs, generally, a man with a trained school nurse (usually female), to deliver the programme and teachers are invited to remain in the room and join in group work and help with behaviour control. The peer work follows later in the programme. Active methods are used throughout the scheme and in all cases ground rules of behaviour are set at the beginning of the sessions, including a ban on personal remarks or disclosures making a safe atmosphere for working. In years nine and ten scenarios and case studies are used, together with group work, discussion and then role-play to deliver the material. The team believes strongly in collaborative learning 'teaching kids to listen, discuss, express opinions and ask questions about different subjects'. The team believes that this approach is also essential for drugs education and encourages real life discussion about relationships and helps children build relationships and understand that breakdown is often caused by lack of communication.

The leader advocated reflective questioning techniques and thinks that teachers need training in these techniques, together with the philosophy of collaborative learning and that they must be prepared to relinquish their 'power advantage, some teachers find this difficult'. The team firmly believes that merely improving knowledge, even by a large amount, does little to prevent early sexual relationships. However, educating about feelings, relationships, attitudes and behaviours does have a marked effect. From the team's research it appears the initiative is encouraging the pupils 'to delay first intercourse experience' and shows that they are more likely to have correct knowledge about 'sex, contraception and STIs' than students who have not gone through the programme.

Observations in two schools

The team approach was observed in two schools. In School 1 a mixed comprehensive, a team pair (male and female) led a session for 18 year 10 students on contraception. There was an equal sex split, and the class teacher present. The session began with a reminder of the work done in year nine and an explanation of the objectives of the session that were, the need to listen and talk to each other about difficult subjects, using contraception as an example. The class were reminded of the ground rules and remembered them with a little prompting. The girls who answered and shouted out responses dominated most of this. The team male tried hard to get the boys to respond but the school nurse tended to direct her delivery to the girls, who had sat at one side of the classroom, she rarely looked at the boys.

A case study scenario was used about two people outside a family planning clinic on Monday morning and the class was asked to guess who they were and what they were there for. All the questions and ideas came from girls, the male team member tried repeatedly to get the boys to contribute, attempting to shame them into taking part. The whole was rather female-oriented; the team asked questions about time of ovulation, length of menstrual cycle and menstruation. One boy asked to answer said 'I don't know about any of this stuff only about the bits'.

This session was followed by group work, the groups originally dividing by sex, but this was changed by the team so mixed groups were used. The groups were asked to list contraceptives they knew and then choose the three most used by young people. They were then asked to discuss the positive and negative aspects of these different contraceptives. All had to take turns in filling in a chart. In the general discussion that followed the male team member had to work hard to interpret what he described as 'female mysteries' mentioned by the nurse and understood by the girls. One such instance was 'bubble pack' a term she used to describe the packaging of the contraceptive pill and something the boys did not understand. The boys appeared to have a very much lower knowledge base than the girls, and the whole was female dominated in terms of the needs and responsibilities for contraception. The power base of contraceptive use was addressed and boys informed that girls have all the power in making decisions as to whether or not to keep a baby if they become pregnant. The boy only has the power to decide if to have sex or not. The boy's responsibility was pointed out as financial, paying towards the costs of the baby. No discussion ensued over fairness or division of responsibility.

One group of boys began to behave in a silly manner producing a condom and throwing it about. There was complete difference in the way in which the boys and girls behaved, the girls being much more mature and responsible. The team pair were annoyed with the boys' responses and kept the malefactors back at the end of the lesson. The team male then threatened them, demonstrating an approach often used by male teachers, rather than asking them why they had responded in the way they did. This may have been because the researcher had observed the session and he was embarrassed. The class teacher took no part at all, sitting at the side of the room marking, giving the impression of no interest whatsoever in the subject under discussion.

In School 2, a mixed comprehensive, 4 sixth form students led a session for 28 year nine students on resisting pressure. It was the final lesson in four sessions. There was an equal sex divide and the responsible teacher was an observer.

The peer team was nervous before the start of the session even though it was the fourth in a series of lessons with this class. A relationship had been established and they relaxed as the lesson progressed. The delivery was amateur and unpolished, though well planned, but the pupils were very tolerant of any mistakes and listened and responded well. Role play was used and the groups of three, self chosen, were mostly single sex except for the remnants who were put together under protest. The scenario set was resisting pressure to have sex from a girl friend or boy friend, practising the responses to help say no. They had previously been taught strategies to use in resisting pressure by the peer team. The students responded very well and the noise level was very high. The class teacher was worried that a senior member of staff would walk past and question the noise level, remarking that OFSTED in particular saw 'good' lessons as quiet ones. However, the noise was generated by active discussion. The students were asked to play roles of the other sex.

The role-plays were repeated to the rest of the class who suggested alternative responses and a great deal of interesting discussion followed. The peer team expressed satisfaction about the students' responses in the quick debrief that followed the end of the session. In the peer led sessions no difference was noted in the reactions of boys and girls to the subject in hand, all showing responsible and sensible behaviour patterns and entering into the lesson with enthusiasm. Possibly the difference in subject matter or the fact that these students were a year younger could account for this, but it could also have been the 'teachers'. They, in this case, could be perceived as the significant variables.

Results from Agony Uncle Internet Chat Line

(Quotations are from the 'agony uncle')

There is considerable concern over the links between sex and the Internet particularly in relation to pornography and paedophilia. The problem described by Beishon (1998) is how to make material available for target audiences in the 'climate of concern' about the exposure of children to unsuitable material. The Health Education Authority (HEA) has recognised the importance that the web can play in health promotion because subscribers can 'surf' for information in private. This though is passive health promotion, whereas the chat show discussion group approach is an active medium. Beishon (1998) describes the

work of Will Anderson for the HEA in compiling a guide on the use of the Internet for advice on sexual health and that interactive materials can be useful but warns that the demands made on respondents by the net audience could prove 'overwhelming'.

Anderson with Aresnault (1998) endorse the use of the single question response referring to an approach used in USA on the 'Go ask Alice site' which invites individuals to ask questions and then posts the question and response to all those 'on line' at the time. The 'agony uncle' here is attempting to follow this latter format.

This is run by a journalist with experience in answering questions to the agony pages in teen magazines. These provide answers to girls' problems but it can take three to six months to get a response and then that response attempts to cover general points made in all similar questions. Most of the questions were from girls but a few came from boys, who had read the magazines of their sisters or girl friends and always started with an apology. It appeared that the boys thought that the 'agony uncle' would think he was wasting his time. He began to realise too that girls also liked to ask a man questions to help them understand their boy friends: 'there is obviously a communication breakdown' between the sexes. Agony pages, he said 'can't really help the individual; what it's about is creating and environment that gives a place for discussion of common problems and can reinforce moral values'.

The Internet work began in 1996 as a response to World Aids Day work and grew from there. 'It's completely different in that it's a live auditorium'. The audience visits a screen and fills up rows of 'seats' giving details about themselves, a profile, if they wish. If they prefer they can merely supply a screen name. You can 'talk to other members of your row but my responses go to all the people logged in'. An MC controls the question flow to the 'uncle'. He has five to ten seconds to respond so has to be able to think quickly and as a result has built up a wealth of information on places and people to whom questioners can be referred for help, if he cannot give it. At least sixty per cent of the questions, often more, come from boys. He believes the reasons for this are that he gives an instant response and 'males need instant gratification'. Also the questioners are anonymous, they use pseudonyms which disguise who they really are. This he believes helps boys to relax and ask the questions that they would not otherwise do. Men and boys, he believes, are very bad at discussing feelings and emotions and many boys have problems talking to their fathers and he to some extent provides a substitute. He is aware of his lack of training in this area. He has no counselling training, but takes the job 'very seriously'. His first

question ever, had been about suicide and he pointed to the rise in suicide amongst young men running at thirty percent higher than that for girls of the same age.

Boys' questions are very similar to ones asked by girls on sex relationships, body image and STIs. He believes the big draw is the anonymity, the 'thunder thighs' on the screen is in reality a thirteen year old boy worried that his penis is too small but able to ask the question through this format. He believes boys respond well to this chat line because they can be alone in their bedrooms without an audience, and that computers are 'boy friendly tools just part of boys' love affair with machines'. He thinks that this service, to some extent, counteracts the pornography side of the Internet that many boys find so attractive and use as a source of information. He thinks that his chat line gives boys the opportunity to communicate in a different way from the other forms they find so difficult, that is, they have only to type in short, to the point questions. They are interacting with 'something that's macho and cool'.

It's not like sitting in a sex education class and having to put your hand up for the teacher and then see your mates fall about laughing at you. On this line we can turn off the backchat from the audience if we want, so all the questioner sees is my answer.

He acknowledged that he had to be very careful in his responses as the lads are merciless' and immediately come back to him about any 'double entendres', but he believes that a sense of humour and the ability to laugh at himself is essential to create the right atmosphere. The 'back chat' on the line is also a way of boys slipping their own questions in to see his response and this does not bother him as again it 'gives them a way in'. He believes that the most important thing is that he is 'dealing with their agenda' and as a result of the medium does get asked questions about emotions.

I had a question last week from a boy asking how could he tell the difference between a crush and love. That really blew me away.

One important way of making this accessible to boys is the banter between him and his MC who is female. His response is often self-deprecating allowing the boys to feel superior and therefore comfortable and safe. However, the MC fielding the questions alerts him to anything really serious like suicide so he can change the approach in time. The stress on him is tremendous and he finds it impossible to work with anyone else in the room with him (the MC is in Glasgow). There can be up to one thousand people logged in

at the beginning of the session and he has to perform. He believes that it takes over an hour to prepare himself before the session and he does this by reading over the previous month's questions. During the session he runs opinion polls on topics such as sleeping with someone on the first date and if boys stay with girls they have made pregnant. After more questions the results of the poll are fed back to the audience to promote more discussion. He has to strike a balance between being entertaining and informative and educational and some people, he believes, find this approach unacceptable, but it works with the audience. He is vulnerable to losing his 'street cred' by callers 'taking the piss' and leaping on any sign of vulnerability on his part. However, because of the medium he can control this. 'There are only twelve people in a row and so someone can shout as loud as they like but they can't stop everyone hearing me'. One of the pluses is that unlike a teacher he does not have to 'deal with one to one reactions and respond to all the backchat'. It is not really a one-to-one situation he believes but can appear like that to the callers. As a result of the work he has built up a large directory of Internet web addresses, help lines and information for teenagers and young people for which he has gained sponsorship and has published. To appeal to boys it 'has to look good'; he thinks that boys in particular are 'very influenced by image' so a great deal of the money was spent on the outside cover making it look appealing.

He is eager that other Internet providers offer the same service as at present this is limited to one provider, who charges monthly fees for access. He is interested in the possibility of this service being available in schools so individuals could log on during free periods or breaks, but the problems of the lack of privacy for the callers would he thinks be a concern.

Theatre Group results

These are the result of the interview with the director of a 'theatre in education group', an observation of a performance and discussions with teachers who were present. The group was performing a play to a year eleven group of pupils in a mixed comprehensive school. The play was presented in the school hall by four performers and lasted for about one hour. The year eleven pupils' attitudes changed during the performance. At first they came in a mixed group, many with the habitual 'bored' expressions often expected of teenagers. It took a while for the staff who accompanied them to settle the group and allow the actors to introduce the play. As the performance progressed the audience became more engrossed in the play, until in the final scene, when the lead character admits to his old friend that he is

gay, a general gasp came from the group. Applause was warm and a buzz of talk followed as the audience began to express opinions about what they had seen. In subsequent discussion in classrooms the reaction was very favourable. Boys commented how important it was to realise that teenagers pretended to be something they were not in order to fit into the peer group. They discussed how the homosexuality of the main character had been hidden for so long and why this had happened. The influence of boasting about sexual conquest on the friend of the hero was also raised and the consequences of following these influences. Teachers' reactions were also favourable. 'It really stimulates discussion' and it was 'so interesting, the kids were completely engrossed'. The pupils liked the fact that the play did not 'preach' but gave them the opportunity to air their own beliefs and reactions to a situation and they were not being 'told what we should do'.

This play was specifically targeted towards the needs of boys, their inability to admit to feelings and their attitudes towards homosexuality. The group offers a wide variety of plays on subjects such as contraception, teen pregnancy, bullying and drug abuse. The focus is on the reasons why young people behave as they do and is offered as a way of helping young people to consider the emotional aspects of relationships. The group discussions after the performance are vital and can involve role-plays. The main problems with this method appear, according to the director and teachers, to be costs, which can reach up to £1000 for whole year groups, the lack of ability of teachers to lead good post performance discussions, the use of large groups (the cast would prefer twenty five maximum) and the time lag between performance and discussion in many schools. Funding for the group themselves was also a problem and the actors were on very low pay. They depended for support from a charity as well as their payments from schools and this was never certain from one year to the next. School staff were also concerned about the amount of money that was required to use such a performance and admitted that it probably could not be repeated each year because of cost, even though they would have liked that to happen.

The director believed that theatre could help young people realise that the anxieties and problems they face are not confined to themselves but are often experienced by others. The opportunity to examine these feelings in an open discussion about other people's behaviour can remove, he believed, any threat of embarrassment. He was adamant that the theatre work should not be used as 'one off session' but be part of an ongoing programme of personal and social education. He applauded PSHE co-ordinators in schools who used the

theatre group in this way but was also critical of schools who used the group as a way of 'avoiding addressing these issues in the classroom themselves'. He believed that it was useful if the actors and he could be involved in the discussion work but that this was not always possible as some sessions did not follow immediately on from the performance. Boys, he believed reacted very well to this type of approach as it was non-threatening and many of the plays the group offers are directed towards the needs of boys and their difficulty in talking about emotions. He thought that humour was essential in the performance to keep boys interested, admitting that on occasions audiences 'behaviour could have been better'.

Theatre as a means of delivering sex education is supported by the Sex Education Forum as it can address the fears and anxieties of young people by the use of fictional characters whose problems and worries are similar to those of the watching audience (Sex Education Forum, 1997c). The Forum suggests that issues such as contraception can be addressed, not merely as a discussion of the pros and cons of various methods but by examining the behaviours and problems experienced by a couple attempting to establish a sexual relationship. Areas such as peer pressure, the problems of talking to parents about sexual matters and the behaviour of friends can be dealt with in a more realistic way than by using books or worksheets. There are several companies working in this field in addition to the one researched, most using young actors with whom students can identify.

Results Teenage Health Project

The team offers help and support to secondary schools in the borough in the delivery of health education, particularly sex and drugs education and parenting. This involves going into schools to deliver parts of the curriculum not covered by National Curriculum Science and also work with youth clubs and young people's groups. The team support an annual health event day run by local students for the benefit of their peers, the content of which is decided by the young people. The group also runs a teenage parent project and works with a group of teenagers who have been excluded from a local school in an attempt to improve their social education. The head of the project was interviewed and observations made in schools of the ongoing work. These included observations of sex education lessons and parenting classes using 'virtual reality' dolls (who are as life like as possible and are programmed to cry at intervals), in an attempt to prevent teenage pregnancy. These dolls, an import from America and called 'infant simulators', are fitted with a 'care key' which is used to stop the crying. So far, according to a report in The Times Educational Supplement

(Whittaker 1998) no long term research has been done on the lasting effect of these dolls and that they may be regarded as a passing cult like the virtual pets (Tamagotchi) that were in vogue recently. A teen magazine article resulted in calls from girls wanting to own one of the dolls. Research in one high school in the States however, found that 83% of girls who had cared for one of the dolls doubted that they would have remained tolerant and understanding when they cried continuously. Their teacher thought that the experiential learning was invaluable.

The schools used were those who are involved with the project and where PSHE co-ordinators welcomed the group of workers into the school. In one school in the borough the team have been 'thrown out' as a child had reported to her parents that she had seen a condom demonstrator in the case of one of the workers. Subsequently her parent complained and the team were refused future entry into the school. One school used was a community mixed comprehensive school of 1400 pupils with a very high proportion of ethnic minority pupils. Very few white children attend this school and there is a high proportion of children from Islamic families. The other school visited was of a similar size but with a slightly larger proportion of white students. This school has recently had an OFSTED inspection that heavily criticised behaviour standards. Reports from the two conferences held so far were also read, as the subjects under discussion had been sex education and PSHE.

These results come from the inner London borough where the project is set. Research was conducted by means of an interview with the Project Leader, observations in two schools and examination of material from the project's annual conference reports.

Their annual conference report for 1999 points to the information gleaned from young people about what they want from sex education. They believe that what they receive at present is too little and too late and that overall there is insufficient sex education. Quality, they report, fluctuates from school to school. Some teachers, they said, are too embarrassed to talk about sex and on occasions lack up-to-date information. They wanted to be free in lessons to talk about issues that concerned them and wanted more information readily available in youth clubs and schools. This should include practical advice and chance to practise using condoms and to be given enough information about other forms of contraception, so they can make informed choices.

Interview with the Project Leader

a) The schools and methods used

Ethnic mix in the borough's schools is high. 167 languages and dialects are spoken. This, he believes, causes problems as it results in some schools having 6% of children withdrawn from lessons because Muslim parents do not approve of the sex education offered. He believes that sex education should be compulsory for all children and legislated for as such in the curriculum. In the borough there is a problem with excluded pupils and the team work with one group of 20 excluded from one school, two girls and 18 boys, all poor readers.

The present curriculum has totally failed these kids - they need a different curriculum based on PSE - their lack of socialisation is what has caused their exclusion.

There is a waiting list for the group and he has constant calls from other schools asking for the same programme. He would love to provide this, but does not have the staff, or the budget.

He pointed to the problems that boys have in keeping up their image with peers, 'it's so important for them to be cool'. As a result he believes that boys of year 10 and below tell fantasy stories to each other about sexual exploits and that in fact most children under 16 are not having sex, though the media and under 16s believe they are. When he asks pupils to write down anonymously if they have had sex, it is more girls than boys that admit to having had intercourse, though if asked publicly most boys will claim they have and girls say they have not. The project offers to some schools in the borough (other teams work in other schools) a flexible package to fit their needs. Most schools are keen to respond, as 'many teachers hate teaching about sex'. Biology plays only a small part but he is astonished by 'the lack on knowledge that kids have about their own bodies'. Sometimes therefore, the team has to step back and do some biology before working on relationships, which is at the heart of the programme. The team gets the children to work in groups where possible and he always attempts, in mixed schools, to have a boys group, a girls group and a mixed group to get different perspectives. There are severe problems in relationships education in this area of London, what he described as 'a Sun attitude,.... women come barefoot, chained to the sink and pregnant'. As a result he believes it is essential to include in any sex education programme the influence of the media. It is essential to put things in context and he is concerned that in multi-cultural area stereotypes

have enormous influence. When asked to describe the ideal woman most boys give the following example,

A Pamela Anderson look alike with blue eyes blond hair and a big bust and their typical family lives in a nice house with a garden, sun loungers and all that. It's just not reality here.

It is difficult to help the pupils understand the problems with and pressures on relationships and if questioned 'someone always talks about pets and we have to move it on from there'. He regretted that many of the girls he works with believe that they have the power base in relationships, whereas in reality in the borough this is not happening. He believes that self-esteem lies at the heart of all good sex education teaching and this is what the team tries to deliver. He aims to get the young people to be confident and comfortable with their own bodies and sexuality and is particularly sensitive to the needs of gay youngsters, as they often suffer bullying and derision in school.

He rejected peer education, as he believed most young people want 'an expert adult' though admitted that in some places it might work well. There was a need he believed to individualise the delivery even when teaching a class of 30 or more and this needed an expert. He was critical of schools in the borough

Only one school has a proper PSE department, in all the others the form tutors do the job. But the one school with a proper department is the worst, as teachers run out of the class if they hear 'willy' or refuse to discuss sex because of their religious beliefs.

In some schools, 'half of the class is missing because kids are withdrawn' which he believed is a ridiculous situation. He believed that many schools 'got round' the legislation by sending letters home that 'got lost' on the way and 'nobody asks any questions'. This makes a mockery of the law, whilst technically being within it.

He discussed the work with the excluded group ('they're out because they will affect the league tables') whose lives consisted of taking drugs, some petty crime and sex. One boy's father was about to go to prison for aggravated armed robbery and this was a typical background. In this context he believed the threats in the Teenage Pregnancy Report (Social Exclusion Unit 1999) were pointless. Threatening boys with taking away driving licenses in the future was 'totally unrealistic when they are already driving underage without them' and expecting financial contributions from boys who 'never expect to do a regular job' was ridiculous. Putting young mothers into hostels he thought equally ridiculous; much more useful he believed would be to provide better services for young

people such as free contraceptives available after five o'clock. Youth clubs give away enormous numbers of condoms and pregnancy testing kits free, but nothing else is available during the evening. He was proud that because of the work they had done and the youth clubs' free offers, the teen pregnancy rate in the borough is the lowest out of the 20 poorest boroughs in the country.

He also raised the issue of dealing with pornography. 'One school asked us when we were doing media work not to take in page 3 of The Sun or the Sunday Sport' and teachers he believed would be 'out of a job if they discussed pornography. But these are the papers the kids read!'

A recent acquisition for the team had been four virtual reality parenting dolls. Budget constraints limited the number purchased and meant that what he would like to do, that is, take young people away with the dolls for a weekend is at present impossible, unless they can link with other residential projects. He believed the experiential approach to be the most effective

I don't let my workers chalk and talk it bores me silly lat al.one the kids.

They had also used theatre work very successfully, one group having been on television. Two volunteers are taken out of each class and during the sex education lessons (3 sessions for the rest of the class) they prepare a play. Feedback from the schools had been excellent though 'it didn't do much for the teachers' nerves and stress levels'. The group doing the play, though missing the sex education lessons learned other valuable lessons and the youngsters who watched it asked many more questions. One of the part timers on the team is a professional actor so helped with the performance. This, he believes, is a way of getting around the very high costs of theatre groups, which though he thinks excellent, are well outside the budget of most schools. He had been amazed how popular this approach had been with boys, having worried that only girls would volunteer. At present he is planning to extend this and produce a lunchtime soap opera for three to five days on health issues.

He strongly believes in experiential learning and that if young people are not involved then learning will be nil. 'They've got to own it'. He took the team in 'not as experts' but plans the sessions so that 'anyone coming in could do it'. It is more about 'what we get from

them than what we give out'. The sessions in schools involve quizzes, group work, brainstorming, and question and answer sessions. He abhorred what he described as 'parachute lessons - we parachute in, land and then take off'. That is, he preferred if the team could visit for at least three sessions a year to achieve progression and continuity. Recently, funding cuts had limited the number of schools in which they could work and they had now to charge schools for the service, but he offered a discount for more than one session, in the hope that schools would be tempted. He is constantly worried about money and abhorred the amount spent on dealing with results rather than prevention. The success of the project particularly in contributing to the drop in teenage pregnancy rates he believed was because of the active methods used to deliver the material and the non-judgemental and non-shockable attitudes of the workers. He believed that establishing trust and a relaxed environment is essential. Recent requests from schools had to his surprise been for parenting lessons and the project had run classes for teenage parents in the past but have had adverse reactions from grandparents, who do not want teenage fathers involved with the new baby. He believed that the families in the area cope with this situation by assimilating the new child as a brother or sister of its actual parent.

b) The scheme in practice

With funding cuts (the scheme has another three years funding) he is down to two full time workers and some part timers. He believes there is enough work for at least five full timers at present and they really need to expand the topics covered. It costs the project about £1500 per school, per year to deliver the programme. This is making it more difficult to go into a school every year, 'get to know the kids and get them to feel comfortable with us'. The discipline in many of the schools is poor, but where they establish rapport they have 'kids sneaking in to our lessons not bunking off'. A typical programme would be: -

Year 7 Bullying and relationships

Year 8 Puberty

Year 9 Relationships

Year 10 Safe sex

Year 11 Not usually because of exams but if they have the chance they attempt to draw the whole together.

c) Student responses

He had noticed a difference in recent years in the responses of girls and boys to the material. Now he sees girls whose attitudes to sex appear to copy those of the boys 'if it

moves I'll shag it' and had noticed a problem with self-esteem amongst the boys. This was particularly noticeable with Afro-Caribbean boys, as now more women than men for that community become professionals. He believed that even the Asian girls were moving forward and no longer behaving as their stereotypes suggest. He put this down to media influence and the numbers of strong women portrayed there. He talked of the barriers that young men erect as a protection, particularly seen in the boys excluded from schools, who are homophobic, aggressive and crude. He was trying to get through the macho image but believed it takes time to establish rapport and trust and 'get behind the macho behaviour'. For this reason he believed that some separate lessons for girls and boys are a good idea, the best model being one or two lessons together, two apart and the one together again, allowing time to work through gender specific questions. It appears, he believes, that mixed classes encourage macho behaviour as boys show off. However, in his opinion the sex of the teacher did not matter, empathy was more important and ease with the subject matter. Good training too was essential and if not provided then outsiders should be brought in to do this work.

d) The provision of sex education in school

The present non-statutory position of sex education worried him, as 'schools do not take it seriously' often cancelling classes, taking pupils on visits when the team are due to be in school. This means he has to pay workers for nothing and shows the low commitment levels in some schools to this work. Recently, he had been given a group of sixty pupils, because a teacher had taken another group camping. He had felt obliged to do this himself, as he doubted whether the sessional worker could have coped. These sessional workers receive only two hours training. He is attempting to get a training course accredited, but as yet has not been successful and his dream is to have fully trained workers in schools and youth clubs who all respond to situations in the same manner. Neither he, nor the full time worker are trained as teachers, but have qualifications in youth and health work and a degree. He believed that the new government training scheme for youth workers has a serious omission in that there is very little health education, it is obviously not considered important and that this is also echoed in teacher training courses.

Observations in Schools

The programme was observed in two schools

School 1 Mixed comprehensive with a very high ethnic mix and few white children on role. These were parenting lessons for year 9 pupils, using the virtual reality dolls.

School 2 Mixed comprehensive, more white children, but still a high proportion of ethnic minorities. Contraception and body parts for year 10 pupils. Both these schools used the project team every year in a rolling programme.

School 1

Four dolls were used and left with two classes for a day. The pupils were told at registration how to care for the dolls. These dolls cry if shaken and if their heads are allowed to fall back. They also cry at random to simulate hunger, full nappy, and general misery. A chip in the doll records how the doll has been cared for and a key is provided to turn off the crying. The object of this is to look at the reality of caring for a baby full time, with the purpose of reducing teen pregnancy. Two workers were in the school and they stayed all day to give out the dolls, teach a PSHE lesson on the costs and realities of having a baby, be there for emergencies with the dolls and to debrief the pupils on how well they had cared for them.

The dolls all had names and were of various ethnic types. The workers called them babies. Initially the dolls were given to two boys, one of whom said 'why me - give it to a girl Miss'. When asked why, he did not respond. In the PSHE lesson before lunch, the worker, who was a graduate and a trained health worker but had no teaching qualifications, delivered a lesson on the costs of caring for a baby. There was a general discussion of how things had gone during the morning with the babies, one girl complaining that the maths teacher, attempting to give a maths test to the class, had locked the baby in a cupboard because 'it kept crying'. The content was to do with expenses, the amount of benefit a young mother could expect to receive and the effects of early parenthood on school, qualifications and future life style. Girls and boys took part equally and were very interested in the work, but after a short time with the crying babies and the general lack of control a near riot developed, with the worker shouting over the heads of the pupils. The teacher sitting at the side of the classroom intervened once or twice, then appeared to give up and mark books. The boys in particular began to behave badly and when contraception was discussed made loud jokes about balloons, refusing to respond seriously. Half way through the lesson the worker, apparently in desperation, unexpectedly, and with no prior warning, gave the group into the control of the researcher who had been sitting at the back observing. As a trained teacher with knowledge of the subject area, the researcher had no problem regaining control. The boys were very gentle and loving with the babies, though there were reports of them threatening to kill the babies and swinging them by the leg in

the playground. The worker did too much whole class talking and did not attempt group work, though this had been planned. When the researcher took over an interesting whole class discussion about attitudes and feelings around the subject of parenthood ensued and all the class responded well.

At the end of the day the teachers in the staff room were complaining bitterly about dolls disrupting classes. There appeared to have been no whole school approach or preparation for the day by other staff, so a great opportunity for a holistic effort had been lost. The pupils however, on returning the dolls, admitted that at first they thought it would be 'cool', 'a bit of a laugh' to have the dolls. One said 'I thought it would make my friends jealous of me' admitted that the dolls were 'boring, they never stop crying and are a bit of a pain'. The pupil who had appeared to regard the dolls as a fashion accessory stressed that 'I thought I would like a baby, but not now for ages yet, they're not fun at all'. All the dolls were reported as dead, most having died many times over through rough handling and neglect, most of the clocks monitoring screaming were on their second cycle.

School 2

Two separate classes were observed covering the same lesson with the same worker. The first group had 21 members, 10 girls 11 boys and the second group 27 members, 10 girls and 17 boys. Two worksheets of male and female body parts were issued and in most cases left on the desks when the class departed. There was no OHP in either classroom, so the worker had to draw the body parts on the white board, though in the second group, one boy with special needs, volunteered to do this for him and did it well. The first class was very noisy, with boys shouting out. Their knowledge of body parts appeared very limited, especially the boys' knowledge of girls' bodies. There was a discussion of what would happen if they went home either to tell parents they were pregnant, or to admit to parents that they had made a girl pregnant. One boy responded that he would be beaten and one girl said her Mum was pleased when her sister had a baby at fifteen. The language used was strong and there was considerable shouting out of personal remarks as no class rules of behaviour were set. It took time for the boys to settle but after a while they stopped the competitive behaviour and showed real interest. One remarked to the researcher on leaving 'I asked some good ones didn't I? ... I was a bit silly at first but not afterwards'.

The second group, a higher set, were better behaved and a good atmosphere was created. They received the condom demonstration with interest and asked questions about causes of

condom failure. Many asked for samples of condoms but were refused, as the worker is not allowed to give them out in school, though they can at the youth clubs. The groups were very interested in handling the samples of contraceptives he had brought and in listening to his advice on how to keep condoms to prevent damage. In both cases the class teacher was present and took no part in the lesson. In the first class the teacher on occasions reprimanded pupils about their behaviour and in the second class the teacher spent time preparing wall displays.

Sexual health workers in the Voluntary Sector

Two workers from the sexual health field were interviewed. Both worked in schools with mixed and boys' only classes.

W1 = worker 1 the gay AIDS/HIV worker based in London

W2 = worker 2 the sexual health worker in the West Country

All quotations used are from these two workers

Both workers agreed that as there was so little specifically offered to boys in the area of sex education, and that so little attention was given to their needs that 'anything was better than nothing' (W1). They also agreed that much of the approaches that are successful are not specifically different to those used with girls. What is essentially different is 'how you put it across' (W2). This they both asserted was that boys had 'different issues to discuss' (W1) from those raised by girls. Different kinds of issues trouble and worry boys and need to be raised and brought out for discussion. This W1 believed was why the 'myth' had arisen that boys argue and only girls discuss.

Both believed that for boys small groups were vital and that this was more important than the methods used. W1 also stressed the problems brought by different rates of maturity. He had noticed that when dividing into groups for discussion 'the physically mature students choose to go together and the less physically developed also'. This was particularly evident when working in youth groups as opposed to classrooms. He believed that desks in classrooms inhibited really free discussion work and prefers an open space and chairs. Teachers tend to arrange 'things in clumps, because of the desks' and in classes 'I have noticed that the big ones usually sit at the back and the small ones at the front'. Teachers he believes are not always aware of this divide, nor that students, choosing groups, tend to go for a single sex formation until the end of year ten, when they begin to mix.

W2 agreed and raised the question of the commercial materials prepared for sex education which he believed ignored the main preoccupation of boys with strength and height both of which 'have cache'. He believed that identity often linked to body size and strength is of much more importance to boys than girls and that this is not addressed by much of the material used. Both workers agreed that too much material and work in classrooms centres on girls' bodies and the problems of periods and pregnancy. The agenda starts in the wrong place. W1 believes that too much of the information given on the body is invasive and can be distressing to girls. 'I have seen them squirming on their chairs at the descriptions pained and upset crossing their legs and holding themselves. It is invasive talking about reproduction and the vagina. For boys the body is hardly talked about at all, just a machine for delivering sperm. It misses the point, 'boys don't get pregnant' (W1) Both workers believed that issues of male identity particularly for heterosexual boys and also gay boys are about being a man, male empowerment, how to express maleness and what it is to grow up as a man.

W1 believed that making such a shift in the focus of sex education would also benefit girls as it would move the focus from reproduction to female sexual identity and would be approved of by feminists, but that this was a 'political problem'. The material provided for both boys and girls they both believed is extraordinary that it misses much vital information for example, as the clitoris in science textbooks (Reiss, 1998). 'It's extraordinary; how is a boy supposed to know if girls' aren't told?' (W1) The lack of discussion of masturbation in most sex education was perceived as disastrous, as boys in particular the respondents believed discuss it with each other, or at least joke and boast about it.

Once the issues are right then discussions of methodologies can follow. W2 believed that boys do not expect to be taken seriously or that anyone is really interested in what they think or feel. They do not believe that they can ask what they want or use the words they want to which in his opinion is vital as is the right of boys to 'jump about' as many find it easier to talk on the move. W1 acknowledged that this was a real problem when confronted with large class groups and for teachers who are 'expected to keep control'. W1 also raised the issues of untrained teachers dealing with this material; even in his experience students on placement are given the task, which he believes is 'totally unfair for students or NQTs'. He also raised the issue of gay teachers whose position in schools was to say the least ambiguous particularly when teaching boys. 'I can see what heads think, here's a problem

I don't need'. He believed these institutional pressures are what prevent real discussion of masculinity in schools because 'one group of men project their anxieties and uncertainties onto another and those left in the middle cover themselves up'.

Both workers regretted the low profile of PSHE and sex education in schools and expressed worries that the new guidance on citizenship would mean even less time for PSHE.

W1 stressed that the popular belief about teenage fathers, that they do not care and disappear at the first chance is untrue. 'They only disappear for social security reasons'. Their feelings for their children he believed were strong and most wanted to be involved in the raising of their children. W2 added that one of the main problems here is the tendency to label boys, particularly with the irresponsible tag. Both workers strongly refuted this label and discussed boys' responsibilities in the world outside the classroom, which include looking after other family members. They believed that responsibility has different meanings for boys and girls; boys define being responsible in a different way from girls and that the whole is 'overlaid by censoriousness and political correctness'.

W1 believed that the anonymous question session is one of the best methods to use when working with boys as it saves individual confessions about what is not known. W2 added how important it is to avoid the routine response and tell the truth, really answering what is being asked. He used the example of average penis size 'a question of paramount interest' to all boys. He described the 'PC way to answer' as 'it doesn't matter, they all vary', as completely unsatisfactory as boys will get a different message. All students know that in maths if there is a variation in figures 'there must be an average', so with penis size. To refuse to tell boys the answer will lead to boys believing that something is being 'covered up'. He believed that in fact the adult 'does not know the answer, it's a good example of an answer that is supposed to include everybody and actually excludes everybody'. The answer is to always tell the truth even if it is 'I don't know'.

Both workers believed that for most boys pornography was 'a pretty useful source of info' (W2) and that 'lots of boys' questions will derive from this'. W1 added that they had many questions, which appeared to have pornography as a source on such matters as oral sex and how it is done, and 'bondage, which is of extreme interest to many boys'. None of this 'is

mentioned in the statutory government guidelines but the boys know about it and want to raise the topic' (W1).

Raising the question of sexism, they both agreed, immediately put boys on the defensive and that girls will shout boys down and make them give, what W2 described as, 'PC responses'. W1 believed that when discussing such matters separate classes for the different genders was vital. 'Sexism is derived from pornography and just about starting in the wrong places'. He believed that separation for some of the time was vital as 'boys are so confused' Boys he felt need to 'decide how they want to be taught and that the teacher is trustworthy'. He believed that there were too many variables for boys and girls to be taught together in sex education all of the time. Generally boys have no choice about who teaches them, but he believed that many of them prefer someone from outside school. However, there were other issues he believed that needed consideration such as quiet small boys who lacked 'street cred' and who did not want to be in groups with the bigger, experienced boys who they believe will bully and tease them about their 'lack of experience or street cred'.

W1 also raised the question of employment or the lack of it and that 'what you do' and 'how much you earn' is more important for a man, than being a parent in today's society. He believes that it is not legitimate for men and boys to have interest in childcare, but rather an interest in predatory sex; this is the message supplied by the media. W2 believes that many boys have a heavy sense of irony and tell you the opposite to what they really think, giving the example of men who are upset using anger as a way of hiding it. The myth that men do not show emotion he believes is wrong. What men show is an inversion of their real emotions, anger for upset and so on.

W1 believed that the support of a strong, silent male for boys was often enough. 'They didn't always need to talk', but 'that's got demonised' and that giving 'girls' oriented sex education to boys results in the idea that this kind of masculine response is wrong', but nothing is offered in exchange. The world appears to be saying, 'the responses of men and boys are wrong' resulting he believes in the 'rising rate of suicide amongst young men'. He believes that services need to become more 'boy friendly' and that there is 'an academic/social divide about masculinity' which is widening. Boys see teachers as unfair, punishing them more harshly than girls not discussing their sexual agendas and that teachers' approaches to boys in this area are wrong.

W2 believed that it was difficult for boys to become involved in peer-led work, as being altruistic was difficult for boys who wanted to 'maintain street cred'. It was more acceptable for a boy to say 'I'm doing it for me than for other boys'. W1 agreed that as far as he was concerned he had yet to be convinced that peer-led work was the way forward for boys. He also touched on the need to speak personally to boys and to be ready to discuss one's own sexuality, though he agreed this was almost impossible for teachers in the present climate and 'frowned upon' but it does work. He also stressed the need for humour when dealing with this subject and that teachers should be 'spontaneous, have fun and laugh'.

W2 agreeing with W1 also strongly believed that NQTs should not be asked to work in this area as it showed a 'lack of respect' for the deliverer and that boys' exclusion from what is considered girls' interest material, such as menstruation, is ridiculous and should not be permitted. W1 thought that commercial firms who offer this service should be told to deliver the material to both sexes and that 'generally its because they're scared the boys will muck about' that they refuse to do so. This exclusion, he believed, resulted in boys getting an incomplete picture and that this was continued in NC science which 'is about the female gender and reproduction'. This he stressed was the root of the problem and that it was 'a very funny way of looking at sex education because it means it is not about genders but the female gender'.

Both agreed that confidence in what you are doing in the classroom is essential, together with a shared agenda, with time allowed for the boys to settle and relax and that constantly asking them 'what do you want to know' is boring. Going into classrooms with one idea in mind such as the lowering of pregnancy rates 'will cut out a lot of important information' (W1) that is essential for boys.

The Netherlands

Results of the research in The Netherlands regarding sex education there includes interviews with a Teacher Educator and a secondary school teacher and a focus group with teacher training students.

Interview with a Teacher Educator (primary specialist)

Only broad guidelines are given for the curriculum and the attainment targets set are wide-ranging, not specific. Children in the primary sector should know that they have social and

affective needs, whilst in secondary school children must be taught to describe the different parts of the body and about procreation. In practice the teacher Educator believed teachers respond to children's needs especially puberty and hormonal changes. There is a great deal of pornography on Dutch television and the commercial sex trade in Amsterdam, he believes, means that children are constantly confronted by sex. The recent influx of immigrants into the population has caused conflict about the values taught in Dutch schools. He believes that on the whole Dutch people are not comfortable with discussing personal topics, though there is a great deal of exposure on television to paedophilia and incest. These areas are not specifically addressed in schools. Boys and girls are not divided for sex education lessons though boys' academic achievement is of concern as it is in England.

Focus groups with teacher training students

Teacher training students were asked to discuss their ideas about sex education in Dutch schools, their own experiences and what they had witnessed whilst out in schools on placement.

Many students thought that sex education, mainly concentrated in the secondary sector was started too late and should begin at age 4-5 years. They believed that in The Netherlands the sex education given was too clinical and practical, not sufficiently addressing the areas of feelings, emotions and the difference in these regards between men and women. Sex education occurs in science lessons and they questioned as to whether this allowed sufficiently informal methods to be used. They stressed the need for children's involvement and allowing them to ask questions. One gave an example where primary pupils had been encouraged to give presentations to the rest of the group on an area of interest to them and two girls had given an excellent presentation on menstruation to a mixed class. Other examples from the primary stage were given where again presentation techniques had been encouraged as a way of involving children in their own education. Material used in schools for sex education is wide ranging and covers topics such as homosexuality at both primary and secondary level. The sexes were not separated and the students found the idea difficult to comprehend. Most thought that Dutch children could discuss these matters openly with each other and their teachers. They attributed the low teenage pregnancy rates in The Netherlands to the strong Protestant ethic and to family life and beliefs rather than to education.

Interview with a secondary school teacher.

This man, a biologist, had recently been working with the Dutch government and schools in Moscow helping teachers there to start sex education classes. He had a particular interest in the methods used to deliver sex education. In this area of The Netherlands sex education occurs twice in the secondary school programmes. At age 13-14 the aspects of puberty and development of boys and girls is discussed. This is over three to four weeks with two lessons each week. The sexes are never separated. At age 15-16 material on sexual relationships, hormones and their effect on the body during menstruation and pregnancy are covered. Contraception methods, their reliability, medical effects and how they can effect sexual relations are addressed. The positive and negative sides of contraception using samples are discussed and what effects these have on ovulation.

The methods used to deliver this material are designed at first to remove embarrassment by allowing students to discuss the words associated with sex that 'can cause giggles'. This is done by a teacher interactive method, students shouting out terms for the teacher to write on the board. This he believes helps overcome silliness and shyness. Textbooks are used but videos are a preferred way of starting off discussion and role-play. This is done in small groups. To overcome the lack of understanding between the sexes a circle technique is used. Boys and girls are divided into two groups and form two circles. Each boy is paired off with a girl and one pupil from the pair takes a topic from a questions envelope. The pair then discusses this question from the point of view of girls and boys. This exercise is repeated with different questions and a change of partner. The teacher believes that this pair work helps to break down the sex barriers and overcome the boys' behaviour problems. Students have the opportunity to hear and respond to others' points of view. No outsiders are used in delivering this programme nor are theatre groups or peer educators.

The alternative methodologies overall summary

It quickly became clear that all the alternative methods have ideas to offer the sex educator but that there were many drawbacks associated with them as well as strengths which could be used. One of the main concerns was how these methods were linked in many cases to the enthusiasm and expertise of individuals and that replication would be difficult with other personnel and situations. Cost was another important factor, particularly in relation to the use of outside agencies such as the theatre group and the specially trained experts such as the peer educators. The peer work itself, the student tutoring and the pairs work used in The Netherlands all had useful ideas to offer, some of which could be repeated in other

cultures and situations. The use of anonymity by the agony uncle was also a useful pointer agreeing with the focus groups' feelings about personal exposure but the limited nature of the coverage of the topic could only make this an add on, a bonus to a main sex education programme. It became increasingly clear that the reason for the success of many of these ventures was the use of enthusiastic personnel possibly pointing to the need for specialists to deal with this area. Also the lack of specific training for teaching of some of the 'experts' did cause problems with class management. Messages here showed the need for good follow up discussions of presentations, sufficient time allowance and adequate financing with personnel who were able to deal with questions and not be embarrassed by any of the material used or questions asked.

The experts themselves pointed to similar problems to those raised in the schools and by the focus groups, namely the lack of time given to the subject, the lack of expertise of teachers, the fragmentation of delivery in schools, the prohibitive costs of using outsiders, the differences between schools, the inability of many teachers to cope, the methods used for teaching and the size of groups.

Chapter 9 Analysis

Establishing the Criteria Against Which to Evaluate Sex Education Provision

In order to evaluate the sex education provided in schools at present and the alternative methods researched a set of criteria against which to judge provision was defined. Sources for the criteria were the literature on boys' needs in sex education, the opinions and attitudes of the young men in the focus groups and the suggestions made by male sex educators who are used to working with boys. Comments made at the end of the questionnaires to boys on how sex education could have been improved were also used, together with the questionnaire data on what and how the respondents wanted to be taught. It would have been easy for the researcher to measure provision against personally held values, but in order to obtain validity and objectivity the former method was chosen. This allowed for the mapping of provision both in schools and by the alternative methods researched to see what matches were made with the criteria. In theory, therefore, the method producing the highest matches to these criteria would be the best approach. However, it was no means certain, in fact unlikely, that one particular method would prove overwhelmingly superior. The set of criteria devised provides a model for good practice for sex education to meet the needs of boys.

We should be aware of the implications of this approach when based on user responses and good practice, the area of sex education is value laden. The criteria arrived at by searching literature and asking the boys' opinions may not have matched values and beliefs held by teachers or health education professionals or government agencies. The major dilemma over Section 28 of the 1988 Local Government Act that has, in recent years, caused so much controversy is one such point. The question arose as to whether present legislation and guidelines (DfE, 1994; DfEE, 2000) which are in a state of flux should regulate the criteria devised. To attempt to do this would have seriously constrained the criteria. Without liberty to start the planning afresh, it is possible that aspects of what young men require from sex education would have been difficult to deliver when constrained by present legislation or approaches. The criteria therefore are not constrained by the 1993 or 1996 Education Acts, Circular 5/94, the 2000 Learning and Skills Act, the DfEE (2000) Guidelines for Sex and Relationships Education, or the Section 28 controversy. A further problem is the requirement to teach sex education from a moral standpoint and with regard for marriage and family life. The multicultural nature of British society and the decline in

religious beliefs have led to a reduction in old moral certainties, particularly as regards the treatment of women and homosexuals. These deep-seated but differing beliefs, coupled with the confusion over what constitutes family life and a stable relationship add to the problem. The criteria therefore take no account of these continuing arguments and merely concentrate on the expressed needs of the boys who also had differing values and beliefs from each other.

The criteria were determined firstly by looking for commonalities between the responses of boys in the focus groups and from questionnaire qualitative responses. These were then compared to literature and research and to the advice of the sex education workers. Where there was marked agreement between all sources a criterion was established. The researcher's own experience during observations and interviews was used as a final source where ideas differed. However, there was a very high level of agreement between all sources. The references that follow are all to be found in the initial literature search with detailed explanation there of points raised by authors cited here.

**The Criteria for good sex education in relation to the needs of boys:
Numbered C1-C8. (See Figure xviii)**

Criteria 1- 6 are general in nature dealing with **boys' needs for special consideration and their rights to receive sex education.**

Criterion 7 concerns **what should be taught** and is divided into three sections, which concern the following: -

a) information and knowledge b) skills c) attitudes

Criterion 8 concerns **the teachers that boys need** their characteristics and attitudes.

Finally suggestions for criteria that could be used to judge the effect of sex education for boys in the long term are suggested, though it is not possible to assess these in a short-term study.

The criteria and the resources used to create them.

C1-6 The needs and rights of boys as regards sex education

C1. Should be taught within a framework of legislation and be statutory and **available to all as a right.** [SEU 1999; Epstein and Johnson 1998; Sheldon 1997; Ingram, 1997; Sex Education Forum (1997b); Interview with Teenage Health Project worker 1999 (this research); Barnard (1997); Sex Education Forum (1998); Focus group boys in the main

thought that this was essential, though two boys did think that parents should have the right to withdraw their children.] All these writers and the boys called for changes in the law to make sex education statutory with a defined curriculum and available to all students as a right. This would need a change in legislation and government attitude

C2. Should be delivered in a continuous progressive way from the start of schooling, building on what has gone before and not delivered as a short sharp shock. [Social Exclusion Unit (1998); Baker (1998) Healthlines (1998); Sex Education Forum (1997a); NCC (1990); BMA (1997); Focus group results - sex education starts too late.] The importance of a continuous approach based on a Brunerian model (Sutherland, 1992) is demanded by these and many other researchers. The need to revisit and expand knowledge and skills in accordance with developing maturity is obvious to these writers, as is the need to reinforce what has already been learned and not to expect that single inputs will solve the problem.

C3. Should be set within a clear moral framework. [Focus group boys thought this important and this is echoed by Travis (2000); Green (1996); Jones (1999); DfEE (2000) but all sources acknowledge the difficulty with regard to which moral framework should be used.] All writers agree that it is essential for children to be taught right from wrong and the boys agreed with this. However, the difficulties of deciding on a set moral framework were obvious and all sources suggest that the students themselves should be empowered to make moral judgements for themselves, having been given essential information and being helped to practice this type of decision making. This is good health education practice.

C4. Should start where the children are and be influenced by what they already know and what they want to know, their expressed needs and concerns in particular their desire to understand feelings and attitudes towards sexual matters. [Focus group strongly expressed this; NCC (1990); Sex Education Forum (1997b).] This is good educational practice in all areas, not just sex education, ensuring that children's experiential knowledge is brought into the learning experience. All authors and many teachers and parents agree that children are heavily influenced by the media in the area of sexual relationships and behaviours and that this influence begins at an early age.

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Figure xviii Criteria against which the sex education given to boys in the venues researched is to be assessed

Criterion 1	Should be taught within a framework of legislation be statutory and available to all as a right.	b) Skills i) Assessing and using services GP FP Clinics Sexual Health Clinics. ii) Parenting, being a father. iii) How to provide support to others. iv) Condom use v) How to discuss feelings and emotions. vi) Decision making vii) Problem solving
Criterion 2	Should be delivered in a continuous way from the start of schooling.	
Criterion 3	Should be set within a clear moral framework.	
Criterion 4	Should start where children are and be influenced by what they already know and what they want to know.	
Criterion 5	Should be taught in groups of no more than 15 students.	
Criterion 6	Should allow boys some time alone to raise issues and overcome macho behaviour.	c) Attitudes i) Developing responsible attitudes towards sexual matters and the opinions of others in this regard. ii) Challenge stereotyping and labelling. iii) Understand that being sexually active is a choice for each individual
Criterion 7	What boys need to be taught a) Information and Knowledge i) Physical development reproduction sexual health sexuality and sexual behaviour. ii) Control and promotion of fertility. iii) HIV/AIDS and other STIs	

Criterion 8	Desired Characteristics of Teachers	viii) Accept that boys and girls are different develop at different rates and made need different treatment.
i)	Should have clear aims and objectives set within a policy agreed by all.	ix) Create a safe environment.
ii)	Have good subject knowledge.	x) Accept that students learn about sex from a variety of sources.
iii)	Be highly trained in sex and relationships education.	xi) Praise and raise boys' self-esteem.
iv)	Use a wide range of methods when teaching particularly suited to boys' preferences.	xii) Answer questions directly.
v)	Use active methods of learning.	xiii) Tackle sex education from a male standpoint.
vi)	Use outside agencies where appropriate.	xiv) Understand the boy culture in school.
vii)	Relaxed and empathetic and relate well to boys.	xv) Encourage co-operative working in discussions of feelings and attitudes

C5. Should be taught in groups of no more than 15 students. This would help prevent poor behaviour and embarrassment and provide a safer environment. [Focus groups and questionnaires all stressed this, as did many of the teachers involved in delivery.] The researchers say little here as most were concentrating on dealings with the situation as it is in schools today. However sex education workers all called for smaller groups and teachers firmly believe that in all subjects smaller classes aid learning. When teaching such a sensitive subject it is obvious that having fewer pupils to deal with will aid a teacher's chance of success and produce a more relaxed and safe environment for the majority of pupils and make things easier for the teacher.

C6. Should allow boys some time alone to raise issues and feel safe when discussing difficult subjects and give them the chance to get through and beyond macho behaviour. [Salisbury and Jackson (1996); Biddle and Forrest (1997); Anderson (1997); Wood (1998); Focus group boys really wanted this. Questionnaires - many advocated this, Baker (1998); Social Exclusion Unit (1999); Lenderyou and Ray (1997); Blake (1997).] There is some dispute over the question as whether or not to separate the sexes for sex education. However, from the responses of the boys, particularly those in single sex schools and from sources such as teachers, student tutors, and health workers it appears that time away from girls would benefit a large proportion of boys, particularly those who feel the need to 'show off' in front of girls, or those who find the mixed environment threatening and intimidating. Total separation therefore is not suggested but a proportion of the allocated time should be spent in single sex groups or possibly in one to one situations.

C7. What boys need to be taught which should provide a balanced delivery between information, knowledge and skills and attitudes

a) Information and Knowledge

- i) Physical development, sexual reproduction sexual health, sexuality and sexual behaviour. How humans produce babies and babies grow into adults, main stages of the human life cycle, physical and emotional changes of adolescence. [This is part of National Curriculum Science, Focus groups and sex workers stressed the lack of explicit knowledge in this area.]

ii) Control and promotion of fertility.

A full and detailed anatomical account of both male and female body parts, including the areas that in particular give sexual pleasure. [Reiss (1998), Focus groups.] This is to include the use of contraception, fertility aids and the problems and causes of low fertility. The boys considered it essential that young men should understand how to give sexual pleasure to a partner.

iii) HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted infections (STIs). [Morgan (1996); Reiss (1998); Sheldon (1997); Ingram (1997); BMA 1997; Healthlines (1995).] Focus Groups and the results of questionnaires demonstrated the need of the boys for accurate information but a curriculum that is much wider than mere biology.] There has been a considerable rise in young people becoming infected with STIs in recent years but the concentration in schools has been solely on HIV and AIDS as emphasised by Boseley (1998).

b) Skills

- i) Accessing and using services available, such as FP Clinics, GPs and Sexual health clinics. [Forrest (1998); BMA (1997).] If young people are to be helped to avoid early pregnancy and sexual disease this skill is essential. At present many of this age group are reluctant to seek advice and unsure of where to go to obtain it, often fearing a lack of confidentiality and a preaching attitude as underlined by Crossley (2001).
- ii) Parenting specifically, being a father, the responsibilities and pleasures. [Focus Groups; Sex education workers; Salisbury and Jackson (1996).] Essential if boys are to face the responsibilities brought by sexual relationships. At present there is little parenting education in schools or elsewhere.
- iii) How to provide support for others e.g. other men having problems with relationships and particularly partners. [Focus groups: Forrest (1998).] The boys themselves and many of the authors admit that boys find discussing emotional topics and problems difficult and Crossley (2001) writes of the hegemony of male toughness so prevalent in schools.

The development and practice of skills such as:-

iv) Condom use [Sex Education Forum (1996,1997a), Focus groups, Questionnaires]. Boys need to practice this and be helped to admit that there are things they need to learn, peer group pressure often making this very difficult.

v) Communication skills including: -

How to discuss feelings and express concerns about oneself and the behaviour of others [Salisbury and Jackson (1996); Wood (1998); Eardley Focus groups; Questionnaires.]

Putting one's own view and personal needs forward clearly and appropriately and having the skills to negotiate with others in order to achieve the results you need without damaging those of others e.g. handling and resolving conflict - being assertive but not aggressive in pressured situations [SEU (1999); Epstein and Johnson (1998); Focus groups.]

Many of the above authors write of the difficulties boys have with expressing feelings and emotions, admitting to fears and being unable to cope with emotion, turning it into an aggressive response. The boys in the focus groups expressed this concern very clearly and asked for help realising that girls were much more adapt and skilful in this regard.

vi) Decision making skills:

Making sensible informed choices, making moral judgements on how to act in a given situation, deciding to act responsibly as an individual or a group member with regards to sexual matters. [Sex Education Forum 1997a; BMA 1997; Focus groups.] This is a skill needed by all adults and requires practice.

viii) Problem solving skills - :

in particular how to analyse a problem, organise and plan work and approaches in order to solve the problem, with specific emphasis on sexual and relationship problems. [Hannan (1996); SEU (1999); Questionnaires; focus groups]. Merely being given information on sexual and relationship matters is of no particular use. Boys need to be able to apply the knowledge to real life problems.

c) Attitudes

- i) Developing responsible attitudes towards sexual matters and towards the opinions of others. Understanding that there are cultural differences in attitudes towards sexual relations and that these should be respected [Salisbury and Jackson (1996); Forrest (1998).] Young people are growing up in a multi-cultural society and need to understand others' attitudes and beliefs. Many of the authors raise the question of boys' attitudes to responsibility. Popular myth encouraged by the media appears to show boys as irresponsible, though researchers and the boys themselves refute this.
- ii) Be able to challenge stereotyping and labelling particularly of girls and homosexuals [Chaudhary (1998); BMA (1997); Focus groups.] This is part of social responsibility and goes beyond sex education.
- iii) Understand that to engage in sexual activity is the choice of each individual and no one should be coerced into such behaviour against their will or beliefs. That celibacy is an option that may be considered. [SEU (1999); Focus groups; some questionnaire respondents mentioned this as important.] It is essential that young people do not see sexual relationships at an early age as the only acceptable way to behave and that there is another option for mature adults.

C8. Desired Characteristics of teachers

Should be taught by teachers who: -

- i) Are given or construct clear aims and objectives within a set policy agreed by all involved. [SEU (1999); Barnard (1997); Sex Education Forum (1998).] This is good accepted teaching practice expected by the DfES and the Teacher Training Agency as a matter of course when planning lessons.
- ii) Have good specific subject knowledge. [Grossman et al. (1989); Shulman in Bennet and Carr (1993); Focus groups; Questionnaires.] Many teachers at present are untrained in this area and incorrect information can have serious consequences.
- iii) Are highly trained in this area of education and choose to work within it. [Sex Education Forum (1997a); Bennet (1993); BMA (1997); SEU (1999); Focus

groups; Questionnaires]. Writers believe that no teacher should be forced to work in this area and that specialists are best at working with this material, a view supported by OFSTED (2002).

- iv) Have the skills to use a wide range of methodologies with particular understanding of the specific needs of boys as regards a structured delivery with short term goals and the difficulties boys have with expressing feelings. [Kenway et al. (1998); Epstein and Johnson (1998); SEU (1999); Salisbury and Jackson (1996); Tones (1993); Blake (1997); Hannan (1996); Moir and Moir (1998); Judd (1998).] Research the above authors has shown that boys benefit from particular kinds of teaching and have different learning styles to girls. To enable teaching to be effective teachers need to have the skills to select and use the most suitable methods for boys.
- v) Use active learning methods and involve the students directly e.g. discussion techniques, listening exercises, case studies, drawings, situation cards, story telling, role play. [Wood (1998); BMA (1997); Focus groups; Questionnaires.] At all costs avoid overlong, unstructured discussions, too many worksheets and avoid having open class sessions where boys can shout out answers. [Blake (1997); Salisbury and Jackson (1996); Focus groups.] Essential if boys are to fully benefit from lessons and is in any case good practice when teaching contentious subjects.
- vi) Be ready to use outside Agencies when and if appropriate and ensure that these agencies have an understanding of the school policy and beliefs regarding sex education and the particular needs of boys. [BMA (1997), SEU (1999), Focus groups; sex education workers.] Expert help can greatly improve delivery of this material and students often prefer an outsider rather than a familiar teacher.
- vii) Are relaxed, have empathy and relate well to boys and their needs. [Biddle and Forrest (1997); Salisbury and Jackson 1996; Focus groups]. Embarrassed teachers are disliked by students as they feel inhibited and unable to ask questions.
- viii) Realise and accept that boys and girls develop at different rates at different times and may need separate treatment [Forrest (1998); Salisbury and Jackson (1996); Focus Groups; Questionnaires.] This should be applied to all areas of

teaching not merely to sex education as research has shown how differing maturity rates affect school performance.

- ix) Create a safe environment for boys to challenge the macho images so prevalent in schools. [Salisbury and Jackson (1996); Wood (1998); Focus groups.] The accepted behaviour of boys in many schools needs to be challenged but in a way that prevents any loss of face and teachers need to be aware of peer pressure which is often worse for boys than for girls. As sex is seen by the boys as something they should instinctively know about teachers' responses need to be particularly sensitive.
- x) Accept that sex education comes from a variety of sources and that pupils are bombarded with sexual images in their everyday lives and use these as starting points for teaching. [McDaramid at al. (1989); Focus groups.] Students are constantly bombarded by sexual images in the media and come to lessons with a wealth of knowledge and misinformation. The teacher needs to work with both of these.
- xi) Practise the vocabulary of praise; help boys to gain self-esteem. [Salisbury and Jackson (1996); Forrest (1998) PSHE co-ordinators.] The effect of peer pressure makes boys reluctant to admit failure and be seen as foolish or lacking in knowledge about sexual matters. Teachers need to praise boys, not only for correct knowledge but also for socially responsible behaviours, but to do it in way which does not subject boys to ridicule from peers.
- a) Answer boys' questions directly.[Forrest (1998); Focus groups; Teenage health workers.] This is directly linked to the training of teachers in this area. The boys complained of teachers who avoid direct answers and whose manner prevented them from asking direct questions. Teachers need the knowledge and confidence to respond.
- xiii) Tackle sex education from the point of view of boys e.g. boys and fatherhood, boys and sexual health, how to give pleasure to a partner as well as receiving pleasure, how to understand signals from girls which may be contradictory - when, if ever, does no mean yes? etc. [Forrest (1998); Salisbury and Jackson

(1996); Focus groups.] There appears to be a bias in teaching towards the needs of girls, directly related to the danger of pregnancy; boys' needs appear to be neglected.

- xiv) Understand the boy culture in school where to admit weakness is unacceptable. Expose this by for example the use of case studies. [Epstein and Johnson (1998); Salisbury and Jackson (1996); Cohen (1998); Focus groups.] To avoid boys' embarrassment it is essential for teachers to use non-threatening methods. Making boys look foolish in front of their peers is to be avoided at all costs.
- xv) Encourage boys to work with partners to structure their work in order to discuss attitudes and feelings, sexuality and what it means to individuals, including homosexuals. [Blake (1997); Salisbury and Jackson (1996); Focus groups.] Pairs work is an area that many educationalists, not only those involved in sex education, see as essential in order to counteract the competitiveness of boys in the classroom. Emotions and feelings boys find difficult to address. Focus groups and questionnaire responses and all literature describes a culture of non-co-operation and a lack of ability to discuss feelings and emotions. The boys readily admitted that they need help in this area.

In the long term the criteria for judging effective sex education for boys would be: -

- The ability of boys to express their real feelings and particularly their fears with regard to sexual and emotional matters to their own sex and to women.
- A reduction in teenage pregnancies and sexually transmitted diseases.
- The development of a responsible attitude towards sexual relationships
- The development of more mutually satisfactory sexual relationships.
- A change in the attitudes of men to parenting, to fatherhood and the responsibilities this brings.
- More concern over health matters and the realisation that a man's health, both mental and physical is firstly his own responsibility.

Analysing the Schools and Alternative Methods against the Criteria

The sex education being delivered in schools and in the alternative methods researched was analysed against the stated criteria. The data obtained from the student questionnaires.

practitioner interviews and observations was used to produce tables of results (See Figs. ix, x). It is not possible to determine as yet if the long-term criteria are being fulfilled as only a longitudinal study could assess this. An overall picture of the sex education provided was obtained from teachers' and students' responses. The table therefore included, as responses to the criteria, a variety of answers. These were yes (criteria fulfilled), in part (criteria partly fulfilled), unclear (where the research had not revealed a clear answer) or no (not fulfilled). Fig x is a comparison between the schools researched, the total criteria fulfilled and the number partly and totally fulfilled.

In all thirty-four criteria and sub-criteria are identified above. Measured against these criteria results were low for all schools (Fig. ix). The highest total for the thirty-four areas fulfilled was from School A, with a result of eleven and the worst School B with only two. School B also had the lowest result for criteria wholly and partly fulfilled namely six, whereas the total here of seventeen for School C was the highest. The type of school influenced these results in that boys' only schools fulfilled Criterion 6 by dint of their single sex status. These schools therefore in this context had an advantage over the mixed schools. There was no particular pattern of criteria fulfilment across mixed or single sex schools. The most striking element of these results was the inconsistency of provision across the schools researched. Marked consistency in response to the criteria was only achieved for Criteria 1, 2, 8xi and 8xv where all responses were negative and for Criteria 3 where all responses were positive.

Criteria 1- 6

No school fulfilled the first two criteria (C1 and 2), available as a right (due to present legislation) and the need for a continuous progressive approach as delivery was fragmented and inconsistent. All schools claimed and appeared to be setting sex education within a clear moral framework (C3), Schools A and F being particularly strong in this area. Little account appeared to be taken in most schools of where the children were as regards their knowledge and behaviour (C4), apart from School C. This resulted in complaints on the student questionnaires that sex education was too little and started too late, told them things they already knew and was fragmented and inconsistent.

There were, as would be expected differences between what the teachers thought was delivered and what the students believed they had received. This to some extent could be accounted for by the fact that students were remembering back over five years when and

what they had received in sex education lessons and being unclear as to what they learned from outside sources of information. However, it does appear that not everything PSHE co-ordinators believe is being taught is having an impact.

Only two schools were working with the desired group numbers (C5) namely Schools C and F (the public schools) and then only in part as some work was delivered in School C by the use of lectures followed by discussion groups. As for the need to give boys time alone to raise issues (C6) this was not available in any of the mixed schools but was of course normal practice in the single sex schools (School C, D, F). However, these boys did not get the opportunity for mixing with girls either in sex education lessons or in the rest of school life, having to depend on contacts elsewhere.

Criterion 7

All the schools cover the biological details on reproduction, adolescence and the control of fertility (C7ai) and in part the anatomical details of male and female. However, the area of which parts of the body give sexual pleasure appeared to be avoided or dealt with only in the briefest detail (C7aii). All schools apart from School F covered sexually transmitted diseases (C7aiii), though School B confined this to HIV and Aids. Many respondents to the questionnaires asked for much more teaching in this area believing that information regarding STIs was insufficient.

The area of skills teaching showed considerable difference between pupils' perceptions and teachers' beliefs. There was a worrying lack of training in how to access outside services (C7bi). Parenting, particularly fatherhood and support for male peers with relationship (C7ii, iii) was not dealt with at all except in School G, where the visiting health project team took in the virtual reality babies and discussed the impact of early pregnancy. This, however, was mainly focused on the costs of bringing up a baby and the fact that fathers of such babies tend not to be involved in parenting. All schools (except F) attempted practice with condom use (C7biv), though School B had problems with the costs of this and had to move the teaching between year groups and to wait until a supply of free materials was available. Students wanted more of this practical work included. Little was attempted in any depth on how to discuss feelings and express concerns about patterns of behaviour (C7bv). Some areas were attempted but student response was highly variable. Attempts made to aid students in making decisions (C7bvi) were patchy, some students believing they had received some input, others not sure. Some PSHE co-ordinators put this high on

their lost of priorities others did not mention it. Nothing in the programmes seemed to be addressing the need to problem solve in practical situations (C7bvii) and this was underlined by the students who called for more information on sexual and relationship problems people have and how best to address them.

Some schools (A, G, H) appeared to place stress on developing responsible attitudes towards sexual matters and cultural differences, the co-ordinator from School A being particularly keen to address these issues. Others such as School F tended to visit these issues from a white Christian male orientation, which was complained about by the boys. All but School G appeared to some extent to address the question of celibacy as a choice that could be made and that an individual has the right to choose when to enter into sexual relationships (C7ciii). However, student responses of yes to this question was low in all schools. (24% overall).

Criterion 8

Five out of eight of the schools had teachers working to a set policy agreed by all involved (C8i). This was because in some schools a visiting team did the sex education (Schools C and G). In School A a limited team of people were used and in School D a sole person at present teaches all the sex education outside science. In Schools B and F and H sex education was delivered by a variety of teachers and there appeared to be little opportunity to advise all staff of the best approach to take. In one school alone did those delivering sex education have specific subject knowledge (C8ii), School F, which teaches sex education in Science, but this was biologically, not relationship related. School G teachers have no specific knowledge, but use the outside team from the teenage health project to work in this area. Much of the team's knowledge however, comes from experience as opposed to training. The lack of teacher training in this area (C8iii) is highlighted by the fact that in School F teachers have a background in biology or religious studies and School G the visiting team are used, as teachers have no subject knowledge and do not want to teach it. In the other schools the subject is dealt with by untrained staff, whose specialist subjects vary widely. In School B in particular, it is clear that highly reluctant staff are being forced to work in this area with no training and in the other schools (Schools A, E, H) the task is left to form tutors and heads of year who have to be involved because of their pastoral position within the school. Students want trained teachers and particularly hate the fact that many of their teachers appear embarrassed and are reluctant to answer questions.

Whether teachers possess the requisite methodological skills to deal with this material is questionable (C8iv and v). The focus groups pointed to the fact that some teachers were better equipped than others to work in this area and that maths and science teachers were not suitable. This was echoed by the Czech students. For many teachers sex education is an added chore in addition to their already overcrowded timetable. The lack of innovative approaches is a problem, though it appeared to be in most cases left to the lottery of individual ability. The co-ordinator of School H admitted that the use of really active methods of teaching this material was beyond the capability of many of the staff who delivered it, particularly as she was dealing with a reluctant work force. There appeared to be only the briefest acknowledgement of the different learning styles of girls and boys, particularly in the mixed schools and in the boys schools a traditional style of delivery was generally favoured. In School C, however, the PSHE co-ordinator went out of her way to attempt to work in a different way from the highly traditional approach used in general school lessons but this merely meant that she used a discussion technique not a variety of active teaching methods suited to boys. She was from a nursing not teaching background and her team made up of anyone who would volunteer to help as a 'public service', though she did attempt to give them some training. The outside team used in School G had good subject knowledge but no training in teaching methods.

The use of outside agencies (C8vi) varied and according to teachers had declined in recent years due to lack of funding. Where outside agencies were employed as in Schools C, D, E and H these were limited inputs from groups such as the school nurse or in one case a charity. School G used the Teenage Health Team to deliver much of the sex education work in the school and they appeared to have a free reign as to the content of the curriculum. In no cases were the outsiders made specifically aware of the needs of boys. The capability of schools to deal specifically with the expressed needs for boys to receive special provision with relaxed, empathetic teachers, who create safe environments in which boys can challenge macho images and are sensitive to the fact that boys and girls develop at different rates (C8vii, viii, ix) was not strongly evident. However, in School C the co-ordinator did appear to attempt to understand the particular needs of boys in a boarding school. However, here it was noticeable from questionnaire responses that boys in the different groups had widely varying experiences of sex education, depending on the group leader and what issues the boys raised. This resulted in a lack of consistency.

Co-ordinators did acknowledge that students receive information about sex from a wide variety of sources (C8x) but other than School A did not appear to work with this in the curriculum offered. Suggestions from both boys and girls on improving the curriculum asked for more reality and relation to the outside world and their real concerns.

No school appeared to make a special attempt to praise boys in order to raise self-esteem (8xi) and little attempt seems to be made to specifically address the needs of boys as opposed to girls even in the single sex schools (8xii,iii, iv) apart from School D where the co-ordinator allowed boys to ask anonymous questions and sometimes replied in writing. No specific pairs work was occurring (8xv) and School A's co-ordinator had a specific dislike of any form of group work which he saw as 'a waste of time'.

The alternative methodologies

Overall, the alternative methods fulfilled more of the criteria than did the schools (Fig.xx). The sex education workers achieved the highest results with twenty-three criteria fulfilled and twenty-six partly or wholly fulfilled. This is understandable as these men are specialists working in this area and are particularly concerned with boys' needs. However, their numbers are small and help from this source not generally available, particularly in rural areas. Lowest was the theatre group (seven and eighteen respectively), but this was from evidence gleaned from only one performance on a specific theme. However, the prohibitive cost of using such groups would mean that schools could not envisage using this method as a main source of delivery and in most cases cannot now afford even one performance. The cost of using alternative methods must be considered as most schools apart from the well-endowed public schools are concerned about high costs for a small area of the curriculum. The student tutors in the Czech Republic are at present funded by the government.

Criterion 1

In two of the cases sex education was a right, namely in the Czech Republic and The Netherlands. In all the English based methods the right to withdraw students applies. The agony uncle on AOL is only available to those who subscribe to this net provider.

Criterion 2

The student tutors also fulfilled criteria 2 in many schools as sex and relationships education starts at school entry and continues until the age of sixteen. There is a growing picture of this approach occurring in The Netherlands particularly in Jenaplan schools.

Criterion 3

Peer education, youth workers, theatre group and the sex education workers were working within clear moral frameworks as suggested by all government sex education guidelines but the agony uncle in his chat line was dealing with anything that the callers asked. He had a set of personal values and boundaries over which he would not step, but these were his own not universally accepted. Some parents may have been astonished if they knew what questions their children were asking.

Criterion 4

This was particularly important to the agony uncle and to the theatre group in their specific areas of delivery and in The Netherlands where the importance of child centred education aids this approach.

Criteria 5 and 6

These were not met by any of the alternative methods, mainly due to cost restrictions. The student tutors did in their 'grandmother role' offer one to one opportunities for discussion and the agony uncle answers individual questions, but boys know there is an audience of hundreds.

Criteria 7ai, aii and aiii

C7ai was met by all methods except for the agony uncle and the theatre group, as both dealt with specific subjects not general sex education. C7aii was met by most methods except the agony uncle and the theatre group though explanations about the parts of the body which give sexual pleasure varied considerably in detail and the stress laid upon this information. C7aiii, the area of STIs, was met by all the methods though in varying detail and with the theatre group only where the play's subject matter expressly approached it. The agony uncle addressed specific questions when asked and mentioned that many boys asked for information on this topic. C7aiii featured highly in the alternative methods, in that all the participants wanted to work in this area and had received training, though it is unclear if all actors used by theatre groups are trained and choose this voluntarily rather

than seeing it as another acting job. The agony uncle had not received any formal training but had through previous employment gained great experience in this area.

Criteria 7bi, bii, biii.

The agony uncle, who spends much time alerting his chat line users to where they can go for help, particularly featured C7bi, the ability to access services. The student tutors and peer educators also give this a high profile, whereas in the other methods it is of less importance. The sex education workers give the requisite information themselves as they come from this area of the health service so in some ways do alert young men to where help is available and in some cases run men's support groups within health service premises. Cbii, good subject knowledge was fulfilled by all the methods, though the theatre group's knowledge appeared to depend on the content of the play offered. There was little evidence of C7biii being addressed apart from the agony uncle who was actively doing this and suggesting to boys how to support each other in times of crisis. The theatre group and sex education workers did this in part, again in the case of the latter by example and the former by discussions after presentations.

Criteria 7biv,v.vi vii.

All methods except for the agony uncle and the theatre group addressed condom use (C7biv) and most attempted to develop communication skills (C7bv), except for the youth workers who had a specific schedule of content to deliver and tended to use somewhat didactic methods. The peer educators, student tutors and The Netherlands sex education put particular emphasis onto making sensible informed decisions (C7bvi), and this was also in part addressed by youth workers, sex education workers and the theatre group though with varying emphasis, generally due to time restrictions. Problem solving skills (C7bvii) only featured strongly in The Netherlands, where much emphasis was put onto the children finding things out for themselves. Other areas made attempts but again time restrictions caused problems.

Criteria 7ci, cii.

All methods attempted wholly or in part to fulfil criteria 7ci and cii, (developing responsible attitudes and challenging stereotyping). The sex education workers paid particular emphasis to C7cii but the youth workers were restricted in this by directives from the schools on what to deliver and warnings about dealing expressly with homosexuality and gender bias which had caused problem with the local Islamic

population. The team (as a result of the one school ban) was very wary of parent responses in a highly multi-cultural area. All methods addressed C7ciii (celibacy and choice).

Criteria 8i, ii, iii.

C8i (working within a set agreed policy) was covered by all methods, except for the agony uncle and the theatre group. The former consulted no one, working from instinct and the latter had their own agenda which did not necessarily fit into a school's policy. All methods except the theatre group and the agony uncle had good specific subject knowledge (C8ii), (he passed enquirers on to other sources of information) and were highly trained in this area and had chosen to work within in it (C8iii), except for the theatre group. The specific training was for some groups related to content, or a specific skill such as running an Internet chat line, but all of the teams, apart from the actors had chosen to work within the area.

Criteria 8iv,v, vi.

Criteria 8iv was best met by the sex education workers who were highly experienced in work with boys and knew their needs. The peer educators were skilled in this area of education, but work with boys was not their specific focus. However, their use of sixth formers including boys to work with the mixed groups was a great success. The Netherlands teacher was particularly sensitive to achieve understanding between the sexes using pairs work to aid this and the theatre group had a play specifically designed to address peer pressure related to boys demonstrating an understanding of their specific needs. The use of a wide variety of ways to deliver sex education, in particular active methods that engage the recipients (C8v) was best demonstrated by the peer educators, but also well illustrated by the student tutors, sex education workers and the Netherlands teacher. The youth workers tended to use didactic methods, though did involve the class and the theatre group, though innovative in itself, was then not always followed by imaginative approaches from teachers. The use of other outside agencies (C8vi) was not common in most situations, though the teenage health project and theatre group, were themselves outside agencies. However, the groups worked alone and did not involve other sources of information and help.

Criteria 8vii,viii, ix

Criteria 8vii was best met by the agony uncle as he was experienced in the particular area of chat lines, but could also be said of the actors who were working within their element

and specifically dealing in the observed case with a boy related problem. The sex education workers were also very experienced in this area. The youth workers were relaxed and easy in their approach, though this was not specifically related to boys but to both sexes. Only the agony uncle and the sex education workers appeared to fully address C8viii as they focused their work on boys' need for separate treatment. The theatre group did this in part, but performed before mixed audiences. This was echoed in C8ix in that production of a safe environment in which boys can challenge macho values requires some separation of the sexes. However, the peer educators did attempt to deal with this factor by use of discussion groups and role-play though in a mixed sex environment.

Criteria 8x, xi, xii, xiii.

The importance of media and outside influences on sex education (C8x) was appreciated and acknowledged by most groups, though the Dutch teacher did not appear to consider this fact in his approach, keeping it self-contained. He did however acknowledge that children in that country are constantly bombarded by sexual images on television. Only the sex education workers, who had a particular understanding of boys' needs, appeared to understand the need to praise and reassure boys (C8xi). These men also saw the need to respond to boys' questions directly (C8xii) as did the agony uncle and to a certain extent the youth workers, though they were in a mixed setting. The agony uncle and sex education workers approached sex education from a male viewpoint (C8xiii) and the theatre group did produce plays highlighting male dilemmas. However, the other methods did not address this need.

Criteria 8xiv, xv.

Understanding of boy culture (C8xiv) was obvious when discussing this area with interviewees, particularly by youth workers, the agony uncle and peer educators, but was only partly displayed in what occurred in the classroom. None of the groups encouraged pair work between the boys (C8xv) to help boys to structure work and learn to discuss attitudes and feelings with male peers.

Summaries of the alternative methods provision

The student tutors fulfilled or partially fulfilled twenty out of the thirty-four criteria. Strengths here were the specific training of the tutors, progressive delivery, willingness to use a variety of methodologies, sex education taught as a right and the stress on informed

decision making. Weaknesses were large class sizes, lack of specificity in the provisions for the needs of boys.

The peer tutors were strong in providing access to sources of advice and on the practising of informed decision making. All tutors had received specific training on the material delivered. However, boys' needs were not specifically addressed in any way and the sessions on contraception appeared particularly female oriented. The responses of students to the peer- led session on avoiding pressure were very positive and this seemed a model worthy of further consideration. Research on this strategy has shown encouraging results (Evans et al., 1998). However, responses from the focus groups showed a fear of involvement in such work and many teachers were also fearful of parental responses. Further development would need to occur to specifically address the needs of boys.

The agony uncle's main strength was the immediacy of his response to specific questions from boys and his ability to pass on information about sources of help. He provided a confidential source of advice as the emailers did not have to reveal their real identity and he understood boy culture very well. However, this service is limited to one session a month and can only be accessed by subscribers to one Internet provider. It must therefore be considered as a support service rather than a main method of delivery.

The theatre group's strength was their commitment to the material and understanding of the issues. The director had a particular interest in the needs of boys and the material offered was directed towards them. However, this service is very costly and not available to all schools. Also not all theatre groups have a specific intent to target boys' needs, many having a more general remit.

The teenage health workers' main strengths were their commitment to the material and understanding of the issues. The leader, in particular, was attuned to the needs of boys but help of this kind is not widely available to schools. Precarious funding and lack of pedagogical understanding hampers delivery of a full progressive programme. However, a dedicated team such as this in all areas would be a real bonus to school staff and the attitudes and beliefs held by the team as to the essential nature of their work were some of the strongest encountered in the research.

The sex education workers were directly dedicated to the needs of boys and in particular in one case to gay boys and young men. They had a clear understanding of the lack of information and support offered to boys in schools and directed their work accordingly. They had experience of the difficulties of working with boys and had developed strategies for coping with peer pressure and poor behaviour. Their attitudes and beliefs on the need to address sex education from a male viewpoint made this method stand out from the others. However, these men were outside the education system and only available in a limited area and at a cost to schools. Certainly support, such as they offered, would be a valuable asset to any school and more trained workers are needed.

Results from the Netherlands did not support the high reputation in which practitioners in this country hold Dutch sex education. The sample was small and possibly not generalisable, but it may be that the answers, given by all respondents, with regard to the religious ethic and the strong family life were the key to low teenage pregnancy rates, not sex education. The main strengths here were the open nature of discussion and the use of the pairs work to enable boys and girls to understand each other better.

Figure xix Numbers of the 34 desired criteria completely fulfilled or completely and partly fulfilled in the schools

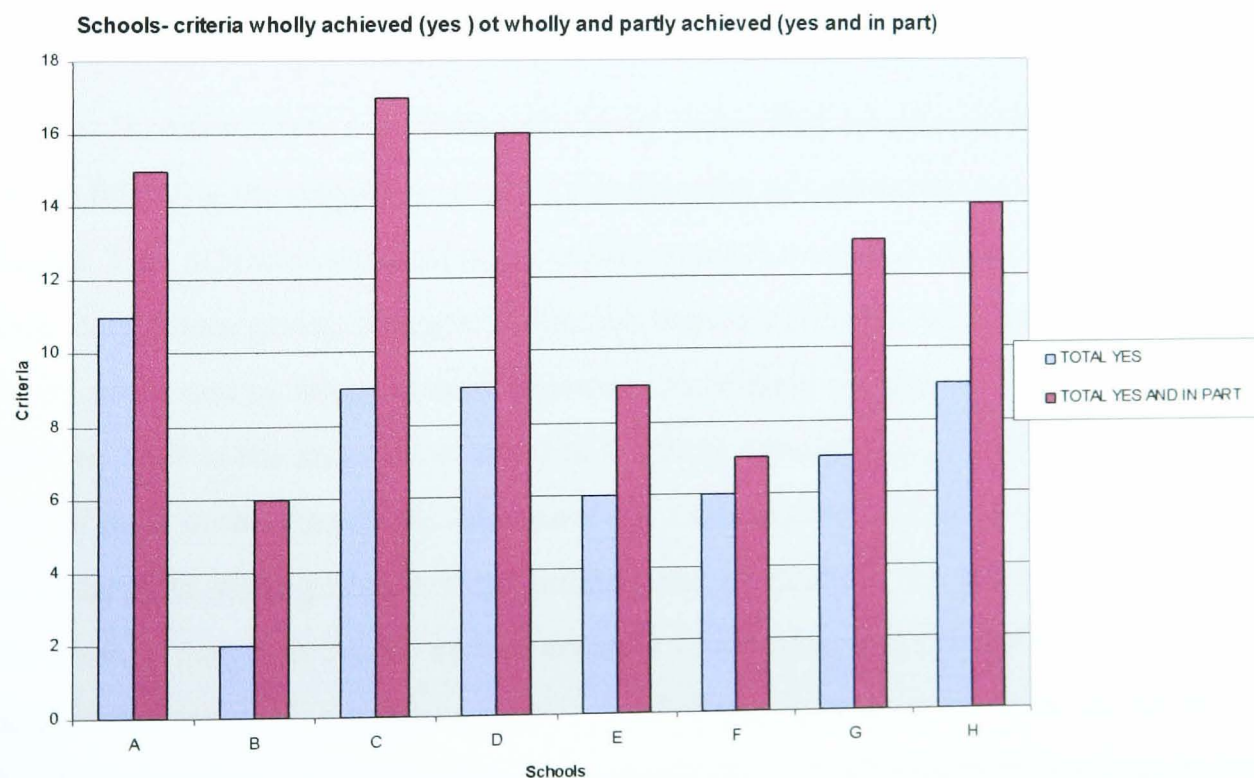
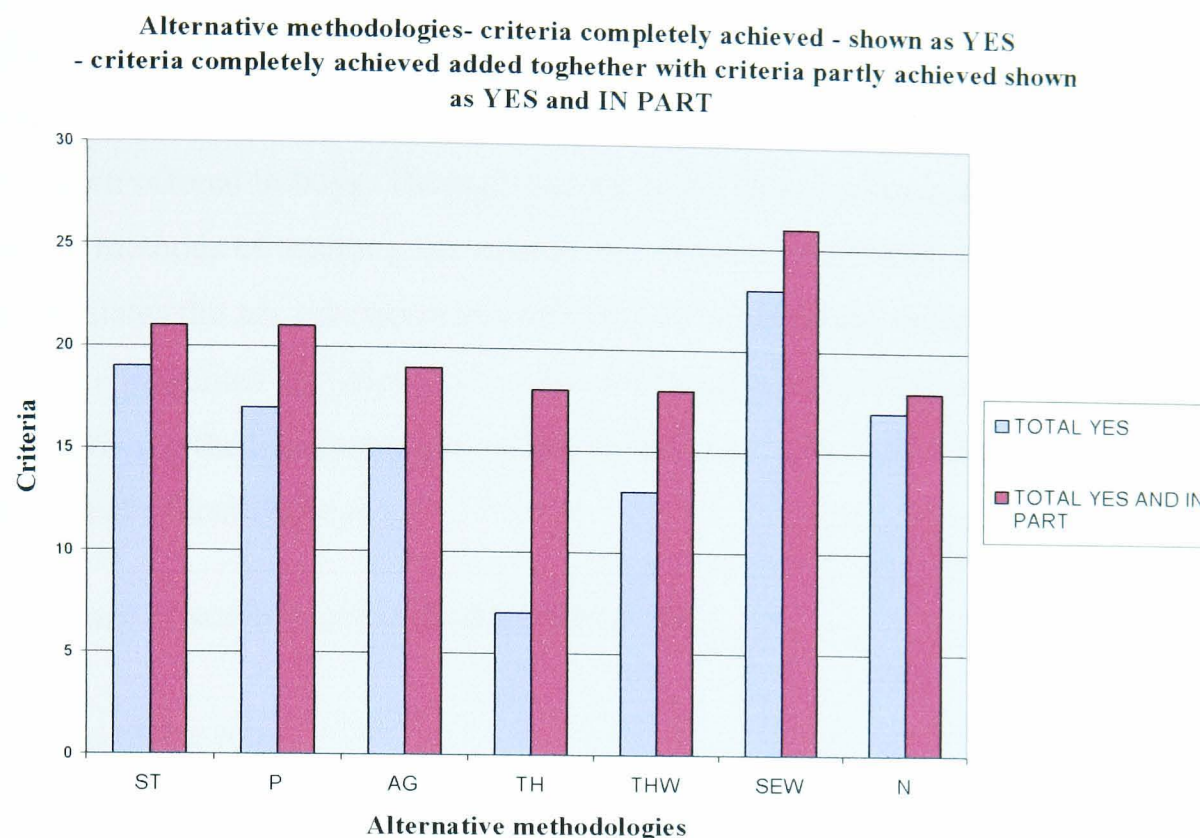


Figure xx Numbers of the 34 desired criteria completely fulfilled or completely and partly fulfilled in the alternative methodologies



KEY ST = Student tutors P = Peer educators AG = Agony Uncle TH = Theatre
THW = Teenage Health Workers SEW = Sex Education workers N = The Netherlands

It is clear therefore that none of the schools or researched schemes fulfilled, or even came close to fulfilling the criteria, but that a combination of approaches would be a more viable solution. This indicates we need (i) a blended approach using a variety of methods and (ii) a clear curriculum giving a clearer indication than at present of what topics should be studied, when and by what method. However, to achieve change would require an enormous shift in the attitudes of schools, teachers, parents and government. The specific needs of boys in the area of sex education are not being met. There is a clear need for reconsideration of the principles that underlie the curriculum, the content of the curriculum, when, how where and by whom it is delivered and the teaching and learning practices that are used. All this requires consideration in relation to the equal needs of girls. Schools and teachers themselves are powerless to act. To achieve change and meet these criteria action from government and agencies involved in education has to occur. Without this change sex education in schools will continue to fail to meet the needs of boys.

Chapter 10 Review and Evaluation

As a result of the review of literature and the fieldwork undertaken in schools and with alternative methodologies it was possible to construct a clear assessment of the sex education offered to boys. Through the use of the varied schools and the exploration of diverse methods of teaching sex education it is possible to claim that the research fairly encapsulates the sex education available to boys in England today. An assessment of the evidence presented by fieldwork is now compared with previous research and literature, thus allowing the bringing together and discussing of the main areas for consideration in the sexual education boys.

The place of sex education in the curriculum

i) Status of the subject

The low priority of the subject area in many schools was clearly apparent. In the last decade despite changing government initiatives, the message to teachers regarding PSHE in the curriculum has merely added to the confusion and academic matters have been to the forefront of curriculum concerns (Best, 1999; Lawrence at al., 2000). This low priority was clearly demonstrated by the responses from the focus group boys and school co-ordinators, in particular from Schools B and F, who complained bitterly about the lack of importance attached to this area of education. The priorities, in recent years in PSHE, have swung between smoking, hard drugs, AIDS and teenage pregnancy. The wide variety of what is delivered demonstrated the lack of a statutory curriculum as called for by agencies such as Avert (Lawrence at al., 2000) and the Sex Education Forum (1997a) and until recently a somewhat laissez faire attitude by some OFSTED inspectors. 'It depends who is on the team' (School H). Some co-ordinators did believe that they had the backing of heads (School H, School D), but this had not translated into more money, training or time, echoing the responses of the Avert survey (Lawrence at al., 2000). This lack of emphasis on the personal and social curriculum was also abhorred by the sex education workers and the health project team. The boys in the focus groups clearly saw the whole area of PSHE as unimportant compared to academic study and agreed that it was not taken seriously by their peers and that they could not see any way in which attitudes would change. An assessed curriculum would increase commitment; if university entrance depended on a good PSHE score then that would motivate many pupils. The recent introduction of PSHE

into the National Curriculum albeit twinned with Citizenship and with the PSHE section unassessed, seemed to have done little to enhance the status of the subject. Many co-ordinators were fearful that the emphasis on citizenship would reduce time allowed for PSHE and would further lower its status.

ii) Parental rights of withdrawal

The question of rights of parental withdrawal astonished the respondents from the Netherlands and the Czech Republic as they considered sex and relationships education as an essential part of the curriculum and that this was the considered view of parents and government in their countries. The co-ordinators in the schools displayed differing approaches, from a stance of ignoring the need to alert parents to their rights, (School H), hoping that letters would be mislaid on the way home (Schools B and G) and in School D not asking questions when formerly withdrawn children attended subsequent lessons. There is a blatant avoidance of the law as pointed out by researchers such as Forrest (1998). Only one boy in the focus groups strongly believed that parental right of withdrawal should be in place, his stance being from the Christian viewpoint of the school (his father was a vicar). The Teenage Health Project co-ordinator firmly believed that this right needed to be removed, as too many young people from Islamic backgrounds were missing out on sex education in the borough of Newham and that these families did not provide information to the young people at home as a substitute. Certainly it has been shown by recent surveys that schools have an important part to play in sex education but at present are not fulfilling that role (Lawrence et al., 2000; Johnson et al., 2001).

iii) The fragmentation of delivery

The strength of this problem was underlined by the findings from the schools showing the varying nature of delivery between science and PSHE lessons. In School B for example the students did not even consider that they had received any input from science and the co-ordinator in School A himself appeared confused as to the contribution of science to sex education. In schools where science was the only contributor the students' complaints were strong, though in The Netherlands where this is common, the nature of the subject appeared to be different, having a greater emphasis on attitudes, behaviours and feelings than in the science National Curriculum. Inputs from specialists such as the peer educators and the Teenage Health Project were few, and in all cases subject to the individual commitments of teachers or schools. Overall there appeared to be a lack of coherence between the subject areas in delivery, students were not helped to see the connections

between the various sections and the importance of PSHE had until recently declined as pointed out by Best (1999) and Hilton (2001a).

The aims and learning outcomes

The lack of clear aims for sex education was apparent. The Social Exclusion Unit (1999) describes one of the main purposes of sex education as being the lowering of teenage pregnancy rates. However, this did not appear to be the main concern of any of the PSHE co-ordinators interviewed. Certainly one such teacher bravely admitted to never having considered the specific aims of the sex education component of PSHE and a second that drugs education had been given a far higher priority in his school. This hardly complies with the government intention in the Guidelines for Sex and Relationship education (DfEE, 2000b). The sex education workers deplored the aims of sex education being to reduce teen pregnancies, as this gave the wrong message to boys, making them feel marginalised. All those interviewed believed that sex education has a wider socialising aim, attempting to improve relationships and build self-esteem in young people. This latter was echoed by responses from the focus groups; the boys believing that they needed social education rather than the limited sex education they had been offered.

Lesson time

The brief lesson time devoted to sex education and the tremendous variation as to when and where it is taught do not imply consistent delivery. For education concerned with such an important part of life three sessions a year seem very inadequate, particularly as delivery is generally confined to the middle years of secondary school as found by Best (1999) and Hilton (2001a). The differing nature of early teaching in the primary sector was also apparent. School C and the focus groups give the picture of a wide variety in the level and type of input available in the early years. This has not been altered by the new Guidelines (DfEE, 2000b) and is not likely therefore to provide the basis for developing and continuing work at secondary level.

Group size

Group size was also an issue both for the boys and also for those teaching them agreeing with Thorne (1993) and Hilton (2001a). The student tutors valued the ability to give one to one consultations whilst the co-ordinators, the theatre group, sex education workers and

particularly the focus group boys wanted smaller groups. These were only seen in the public schools where class sizes are generally smaller than in the state sector. The boys themselves realised the difficulties of behaviour control and peer intimidation in large groups. Fifteen seems to be the absolute maximum to encourage discussion and create a safe environment. However, in state schools, the reality is class sizes of thirty and in School B possibly fifty.

Training of teachers

The training of teachers in this area was woefully lacking. The teachers who were the main deliverers of sex education in the schools clearly demonstrated the lack of training which results in lack of enthusiasm and commitment so deplored by the BMA (1997) and Lawrence et al. (2000). Deficiency in their requisite knowledge base described by Lenderyou and Ray (1997) and Bennet (1993) was apparent to students, who specifically requested better-informed teachers (questionnaire results on how to improve sex education and the opinions of the focus groups). Calls from the Social Exclusion Unit (1999) for the TTA to review teacher training in light of the need for teachers prepared to work in this area have not yet shown any result. A pilot project for accrediting teachers was proposed in 2001 possibly as a result of concerns over the rising tide of STIs. A report of this project to accredit SRE teachers has been delivered (Warwick et al., 2002) and the strategy is now to be rolled out nationally. The success of this initiative at present appears somewhat limited and is confined to teachers continuing professional development. Choice of teacher therefore appears to depend on an individual's position in the school, such as year head, senior teacher, form teacher, head of house or science teacher. The students in the focus groups particularly complained about the use of scientists as the main teachers of sex education, agreeing with the comments of researchers who deplore the biological basis of delivery (Thomas, 1996; Ingham, 1997). The sex education workers and those from the Teenage Health Project particularly deplored the poor information and skills base of teachers, and the need for specifically trained personnel they saw as essential with no NQTs being asked to attempt this work. This was echoed by the OFSTED (2002) report on sex and relationships which pointed out that the lack of trained teachers dealing with SRE lowered standards in schools.

The teachers

The high numbers of females working in this area and the lack of involved male teachers did not give schools the choice of matching the sex of the teacher to the students. However, a fair proportion of pupils wanted a teacher of the opposite sex and by far the majority thought the sex of the teacher unimportant (68%). Certainly the focus groups, after initially requesting a young male teacher, begin to consider qualities such as empathy and interest more desirable, thus agreeing with the questionnaire results. This tends to refute the suggestions of writers such as Forrest (1998), Davidson (1996) and The Sex Education Forum (1996b) who specifically point to the need for male teachers. Wood (1998) believes that same sex teachers are essential whereas Kenway et al. (1998) disagree, believing that the way of working is more important than a teacher's sex. This disagreement by researchers was echoed by the focus group and questionnaire responses whilst the sex education workers agreed with Wood (1998) believing that a man could better focus boys' attention on responsibility for contraception and male health matters.

The luxury of choosing who delivers sex education, let alone their sex or attitudes, was an impossible dream for most co-ordinators. Many believed that newly qualified teachers should not be asked to work with this material and School A's co-ordinator only used experienced staff. In School D the co-ordinator herself handled all the sex education input believing that the form teachers were incapable of doing it well. However, in Schools B, E, and H the form teacher did this work. The sex education workers deplored this idea, as did the agony uncle, because of teachers' lack of training whilst the leader of the Teenage Health Project, from his vast experience in local schools, had a firm belief that most teachers including some PSHE co-ordinators just could not 'do the job'. Again this delivery was specialised, only occurred when workers were invited into schools and paid, so such provision could not be relied upon. They did however have experience and knowledge that would have been of great use to struggling teachers if they could have been used for in-service training.

The request from students to have teachers who were not embarrassed by the subject matter in the questionnaires (23%), in the qualitative responses and the discussions with the focus groups, demonstrated how difficult students found this lack of ease in their teachers. They appeared to feel that it was enough for themselves to cope with feeling silly and embarrassed without having to be careful not to offend the sensibilities of teachers. The agony uncle mentioned this as did the teenage health project leader, both believing that the wrong teacher could do damage to students' self-esteem, an area which most

workers in the field agreed was vulnerable in boys. Individual teachers and workers in the area did give out an aura of confidence but the people interviewed had actually volunteered to work in this field, not so for many of the teachers delivering the material. The student tutors also raised the question of older Czech teachers who were uncomfortable with this subject matter and were happy to leave it to the tutors though some members of staff rather resented their presence seeing them as 'untrained'. The peer tutor workers had all volunteered to work with this material and that appeared to result in a more positive response, however the peer tutor project leader did discuss the difficulty in moving the project onto a wider base and using teachers as the main deliverers. There was a real reluctance, he believed, by school staff to become involved in the work. They were happy to sit in lessons to control behaviour, but did not want to teach. One of the observed peer project lessons fell into this trap described by Kenway et al. (1998) when the male project worker in an attempt to control the boys, resorted to what these authors describe as 'institutionalised power'.

The need for teachers who were trustworthy echoed the findings of Goldman and Goldman (1982) who also found that students did not trust their teachers to keep confidentiality. This lack of trust was strongly expressed by the focus group boys and echoed the remaining feelings of unease amongst teachers about the giving of confidential advice to pupils. Blake (1997) also believes that boys are wary of teachers' ability to keep things confidential. This echoes the beliefs of the boys in the focus groups who were very aware of teachers' tendency to discuss pupils in the staff room.

Meeting the needs of boys

The BMA Journal (1995) points out that boys, who get clear information and guidance from schools, are less likely to have intercourse before sixteen but there was little evidence that boys' needs were being catered for. Millar (1998) agrees with evidence here from the agony uncle, the sex education workers, the peer observation and the focus groups that boys are less likely than girls to know where to obtain information and help. There was no apparent realisation of the differing needs of boys and girls, apart from the teacher in School G who admitted that their sex education programme was in her opinion too girl oriented. The questionnaire results from boys' schools also showed a distinct lack of information on where to obtain contraceptives. The boys in the focus groups spoke of their unfulfilled needs for information on 'man things' such as masturbation, penis size and pornography. Specifically, they felt that there was an overemphasis on contraception for

girls and the power that girls have in making decisions, agreeing with writers such as Biddle and Forrest (1997) and the sex education workers in this research. This was also true of some of the alternative methodologies, such as one observed peer group session and the student tutors, though in the latter some boys did have the possibility of a one-to-one consultation.

Lesson delivery

Boys' poor reactions to the whole process, as discussed by Salisbury and Jackson (1996) and Epstein and Johnson (1998) were demonstrated by the responses to the question about disruption; boys were the problem in the classroom. Teachers too spoke of the difficulty in controlling boys and the focus group boys and many questionnaire respondents particularly requested smaller groups, as this would make it easier to control the disruptive element. Salisbury and Jackson's (1996) request for boys to have time to work through the macho barriers was not happening in any of the mixed school situations, though the idea was supported by the Teenage Health Project team, the agony uncle and the sex workers. The former was not allowed the time to implement his ideas in the schools and the 'uncle' only deals with individuals. The need for boys in the single sex schools to work with girls in this area was acknowledged, in particular, by the boys themselves, 68% of them requesting girls in lessons. However, this had not been implemented, either because of behavioural difficulties (School C), conviction by teachers that boys could not cope (Schools C, D) or no consideration of this need having taken place (School F).

Peer group influence had a great effect here as shown by the response to the question on fears about other students laughing at questions, 70% of students in School E feeling this pressure. The agony uncle also pointed to this problem, which he believed was best overcome by the anonymity allowed by his service. The teenage health project worker who spoke of the homophobic, macho attitudes of the excluded boys he teaches, echoing with the research of Salisbury and Jackson (1996), Bleach (1998) and Lenderyou and Ray (1997). This appears too to be one of the causes of lesson disruption with boys behaving in a way they feel is expected of them as discussed by social learning theorists Conner and Norman (1996). The boys, in the focus group discussions and in their responses to the qualitative sections of the questionnaire clearly agreed with what Anderson (1997) believes; boys, feeling their male identity threatened, respond with extremes of behaviour. This is clearly illustrated by the question on who causes disruption, 68% of students in

mixed schools who believed lessons were disrupted, cited boys as the culprits. However, in the ranking of desired qualities for teachers class control came fifth out of six. It appears that students value other qualities more highly, particularly the boys and that the ideas of Wood (1998) and Salisbury and Jackson (1996) regarding expecting and allowing some bad behaviour appear to be true. The theory of social inoculation (McGuire, 1964 in Evans et al., 1998) holds true, in that training is required to resist social pressure. We must be helped to challenge the norms and values of our cultural groups. The best example of this was in the observed peer group session on resisting pressure to have sex, as the course allowed participants to practise ways of resisting that pressure over four sessions in an active manner. To a certain extent the student tutors also introduced this idea as the whole programme is based on social and relationship education, having a far wider brief than in the English Schools. Blake (1997) stresses the need to prevent boys losing face in front of peers. The focus groups were very aware of this pressure, particularly in the early teen years

The need for boys and girls to be segregated for lessons is somewhat unclear and the results from the fieldwork reflects literature in the lack of a clear preference. Many boys wanted mixed lessons but some saw the value of single sex classes allowing them time, as discussed by Salisbury and Jackson (1996), to overcome 'macho' behaviour. Counter arguments were provided by the leader of the student tutors in Prague, who was firmly opposed to sex segregation, whilst the Teenage Health Project leader suggested a compromise of some lessons together, some apart and then further mixed sessions. From School C however, one boy gave an excellent reason for including girls in sex education classes and for co-education in general. He wanted single sex teaching because

I feel intimidated talking about sex and the opposite sex when in their presence. I would feel self-conscious.

This boy needs to be given the opportunity to practice discussing such matters with the opposite sex for the sake of his future relationships. It is essential therefore that some mixing of the sexes for sex education occurs so both sexes can practice their approach and learn to talk openly about sexual matters. In general there was less approval for sex segregation in the mixed schools, understandably perhaps, as boys in the single sex schools, being unused to girls, appeared occasionally to see them as a threat and an unknown quantity (as shown above). Embarrassment was the main reasons why boys in single sex schools rejected the inclusion of girls. However, from classes observed it was

noticeable that girls were in control during lessons, shouted boys down and made disparaging remarks. Without some time alone it is doubtful if boys will be given a chance to express opinions without censure and be able to discuss male areas of concern in a safe environment.

The restricted use of active methods of teaching was admitted by some co-ordinators who believed teachers 'couldn't cope' (Schools B, F, H) was clearly demonstrated by the questionnaire responses where respondents requested more interesting lessons, more use of videos and role play and for teachers to stop 'droning on'. This correlates with the research of Baker (1998), Blake (1997), Cullingford and Morrison (1997), Forrest (1998) and Wood (1998) pointing to the lack of suitable methodologies for boys in use in school sex education. The Avert Survey (Lawrence et al., 2000:12) also highlights the problem of using more positive approaches to sex education delivery in that they would present challenges to 'the attitudes and skills of the teachers delivering the programme'.

Resources

The resources assigned to this area of the curriculum are extremely limited. School B's co-ordinator was the most vociferous in her complaints. School C, richly endowed was still expecting volunteers to undertake this work and in most schools there was a realisation that outside assistance was only to be considered if it was provided free or at low cost. The health project is at present fulfilling this requirement but the future of the enterprise is precarious. The peer work is also funded by outside sources but looking to extend its remit by using teachers rather than outsiders to further the work, because of the cost. Some schools appeared to ignore the need for any resource allocation for this area, School F's co-ordinator admitting that he himself had produced some material for tutors to use if they wished but few took up his offer.

The curriculum

In many ways, the results from the research into what is at present happening in schools echoed the findings of other researchers in the field. There is an overemphasis on biological facts as claimed by authors such as Thomas (1996) and Ingham (1997) and too little on emotions and feelings. The school questionnaires, interviews with co-ordinators and the focus groups showed that these areas of the curriculum were being neglected. There were wide differences in provision demonstrated by the differing results from the

schools, School A for example showed a distinct lack of teaching on celibacy but school F made this an important part of the curriculum, in keeping with the ethics of the school. Students' complained of too little information on STIs other than AIDs and the lack of content on homosexuality so deplored by Forrest (1998) and Chaudhary (1998) was clearly apparent. This was demonstrated by the low scores on knowledge of the age of consent for homosexuals in the questionnaires (27%) and the obvious difficulty felt by the focus group boys in dealing with this aspect of sex education. The results from the schools and focus groups underlined the criticisms of researchers (Ingham, 1997; Lawrence et al., 2000) in the area regarding the limited nature of input on relationships and behaviours. Input was attempted in some of the alternative methodologies researched but time and money limitations were a problem, as in the work undertaken by the Teenage Health Project and the theatre group. The peer education, the student tutors and to some extent the work in The Netherlands showed attempts to cover these areas and the agony uncle did his best to include these aspects. However, in all these cases there were ongoing problems of access and availability to all but a limited group. None of these groups covered all the areas desired by students in the questionnaires and underlined by the Avert Survey (Lawrence et al., 2000).

The alternative methodologies

These fared somewhat better in terms of meeting the criteria set, but still failed to cover all requirements. Student tutors appeared to have the best approach in that they were specially trained, worked in a consistent basis in schools and offered one-to-one consultations. However, there were no real considerations of a specific approach for boys from this initiative, indeed the instigator and planner believing that this was in many ways wrong. The peer work showed great promise in particular in the area of discussing feelings, and attitudes and giving young people the chance to practise strategies for resisting pressure. It also gave one sex an opportunity to see the reasons behind the other sex's thoughts and actions. However, the sessions taken by the 'experts' as opposed to the peers fell into the same girl-oriented, 'blame the boys' approach, so deplored by Salisbury and Jackson (1996) and Epstein and Johnson (1998). The agony uncle met many of the desired criteria in that he specifically focused on the needs of boys and the methods used to answer questions were boy friendly. However, there are enormous drawbacks as this is a subscriber only web site and Internet links are not available to all boys, because of cost and the lack of availability of hardware. In addition, boys have to choose to visit the site and not all would do so. This solo effort relies heavily on the expertise of one man, without

him it would not function. It is boy-centred which is good and his ability to pass boys onto other agencies is to be applauded. However, this approach does nothing to help the communication problems from which boys appear to suffer, conversely it tends to support their isolation and inability to discuss intimate topics in front of others. There is no cross discussion with girls as to how they think and the uncle readily admitted that he used masculine humour and 'taking the piss', to allow boys to hide their true feelings, a phenomenon believed by Kenway et al. (1997) to be closely related to male-only discourse. This is not really what is required if the BMA (1997), Social Exclusion Unit (1999), Epstein and Johnson (1998) and Forrest (1998) are to be believed regarding the importance of giving boys the ability to express and articulate feelings.

The theatre group was thought provoking and the subject matter covered was excellent and approached from a boy's perspective, without alienating girls. The subject of homosexuality is one that teachers and pupils find very difficult (Focus groups; Forrest, 1998; School E co-ordinator; Chaudhary, 1998). However, this approach could not be used to cover all aspects of sex education, though it makes a very useful starting point for further discussion, raising subjects that many teachers find hard to approach. Cost alone and the unavailability of these groups to all schools rules this method out as a general way of working in this area. It should however be available to schools as a valuable addition to the programmes they offer. The teenage health project's approach of using the boys themselves as the actors in a presentation is an interesting one and according to the project leader worked well producing thought provoking and lively material. This giving of ownership to the students is undoubtedly a useful approach and is recommended by many writers such as Nobel and Bradford (2000), Clark and Millard (1998) and Bleach (1998).

This use of an outside team is from many perspectives a good thing. These people have chosen to work in the area and have a wealth of knowledge to share. Problems that arise are funding of the organisations, which is often precarious and reduces each year, lack of commitment from schools, many teachers appearing to view this as a way out and time off. That unwilling teachers were not being forced to work in this field is a bonus, but the lack of involvement by the teachers in the health and peer education projects is to be deplored. The message to the students was that this was an unimportant issue and their behaviour and attitudes to the work were of no particular importance. The enthusiasm of the teenage health project team was excellent and the students obviously enjoyed their input, but again the complaint was too little time given and a lack of consistency in delivery between

schools. This is a specific project in a small area of the country and though there are other such projects the funding difficulties work against the spreading of this method countrywide. Also the lack of training in how to teach did not always produce satisfactory results. Once again the whole initiative was related to the commitment and enthusiasm of one individual, or as in the case of the peer teaching, a team. This is not good enough for such an important subject area. The feasibility of providing such coverage countrywide needs to be questioned. The lack of financial resources means that in reality most schools will have to provide this area of education themselves using in-house staff who therefore need support and training.

The male sex education workers, aware as they were of the specific needs of young men including gay men, were working in areas not normally approached by the ordinary classroom teacher. They understood the specific needs of boys to examine sex from a male viewpoint, to discuss how sexual relationships affected men's lives and to look at fatherhood. Fears and specific health problems were addressed and these men understood boys' needs to be on the move, their preference for small groups and they knew how to arrange classrooms to encourage discussion. Both workers strived to achieve time for boys alone to discuss problems from a male perspective. They agreed with writers such as Marshall (1996), Salisbury and Jackson (1996) and Nobel and Bradford (2000), regarding the need to consider the methods of delivery used when working with boys. Specific issues such as homosexuality and masturbation which was avoided, in most cases in the classrooms studied, need to be addressed openly. These they believe, as does Forrest (1998), are the issues that interest boys. To begin to attempt to discuss relationships without first dealing with these problems is a waste of time. This approach could be used by teachers, but only if specific and good training is given. At present most of the teachers questioned would not have been able to cope with such an open approach. Schools' B and H co-ordinators admitting that their press-ganged staff 'could not cope' with active teaching methods let alone such subject matter. The two men firmly believed that for boys these issues were the starting point and when that had been decided the methods used to address them could be discussed. They stressed, as did the agony uncle and the co-ordinator for School A, the need to address pornography as a source of information for boys, agreeing with Hilton (2001b). Above all there is a need to help boys discover what it means to be a man in the twenty-first century and that to do so they need time away from girls with a male teacher. For most of the schools this was an impossibility.

Students' opinions of sex education

On the whole the questionnaire respondents were kind about their sex education teaching 84% deeming it as 'okay' or better. Many however, added comments on the need for improvement and a large percentage (51%) considered that it had not prepared them for adult life with 28% in the 'don't know' category. However, the numbers who expressed opinions as to how to improve sex education and gave specific reasons, together with the focus group responses, leads one to believe that their level of satisfaction was probably based on lack of experience of anything better. Indeed, researchers in this area consistently point to the poor quality of provision (Davidson, 1996; Sex Education Forum, 1996; Lawrence et al., 2000) and the sex workers interviewed here believed that in the present climate anything done for boys was better than what is generally on offer in schools.

These findings clearly demonstrate that none of the methodologies researched are fully addressing the needs of boys in this area of education. Certain aspects of some of the alternative methodologies, for example the pairs work in The Netherlands, the peer education negotiation skills and the theatre group's tackling of difficult subjects are useful examples of good practice. However, all these ideas need to be combined in a more directed and complete programme if boys are not to be the neglected sex in the area of sex and relationships education. Little seems to have moved from work in the 1980s, the findings here echoing the dissatisfaction with sex education found by Goldman and Goldman (1982). Students are still complaining about information being given too late, fathers not being involved, worry over asking questions and teacher embarrassment. The overall picture gained from this research is a depressing one of widely varying inputs, boys' experiences depending on what school they attend and what teachers are employed and a disturbing lack of commitment from some senior staff. If government targets are to be met, teenage pregnancies reduced, relationships strengthened and the prevalence of STIs reduced, this somewhat shambolic picture, which does not address the personal needs of boys, requires urgent action. Research evidence points to the need for a fundamental rethinking of the way in which sex and relationships education are taught to boys if the wider objectives of the required social and emotional changes are to be addressed. The following chapter addresses these questions and attempts to provide a pointer to improved sex and relationships education for boys.

Chapter 11 Conclusion

This research has clearly demonstrated that the needs of boys as regards sex and relationships education are not being met at present in the schools surveyed. As these schools, though from a limited geographical area, are typical of the range of secondary provision across the country it may be surmised that they present a fair picture of what is offered today in English and Welsh schools. Little consideration appears to be given to boys' specific needs and in practice schools are so restricted by lack of expertise, staff training and resources that it is impossible to see how things will improve in the near future. To some extent the alternative methods researched offer more to boys. However, they are not the sole answer and in most cases only address some of the expressed needs of the boys. In conclusion therefore a more radical solution is suggested. A strategy to meet the needs of boys as regards sex and relationships education which will address the issues at present avoided in schools, including greater input on relationships and responsibilities, so often missing from the curricular now on offer. It will go further towards meeting government needs of reduction in teenage pregnancies than present strategies, by stressing the role of males in the equation, though that is not its main aim. It will however, have many implications for present school curricula.

Despite the call in the DfEE (2000) Guidelines for Sex and Relationships Education for the interests of boys to be considered, the Avert Survey (Lawrence et al., 2000) shows that the future is not promising, as in the past decade little has changed regarding sex education. The patchy nature of provision discussed by authors continues and the need for coherent approaches and policy mentioned by the BMA (1997) appears to have had little effect. It is doubtful therefore if simple admonishment from the DfEE/DfES will bring about the required changes in the future. Much sex education provided still appears to concentrate on the needs of girls and the fear of early conception. Results from the school and alternative methods research show little provision for the specific needs of boys or an understanding of their preferred learning styles, a need noted by Forrest (1998) and Davidson (1996). The new guidelines (DfEE 2000) still leave sex education under the control of governing bodies. The guidelines are non-statutory, sex education in primary school, outside the National Curriculum, is not compulsory and parents still have the right to withdraw their children from the non-statutory parts of sex education. With the rise in faith schools agreed to by the government it is possible that even more children will be denied access to a full

and detailed sex education curriculum. The guidelines themselves suggest the need to concentrate on the concerns of boys, but give no help to teachers in how to do so. The problems are known, but at present there is no mechanism to address them. Drawing on the research findings from this study we can begin to formulate a policy to fill this vacuum and to address the needs of boys in this area of education.

A Strategy for Sex Education to Address the Needs of Boys

In order to meet the needs of both government, (reducing teenage pregnancy) and of society, (producing boys who make good relationships can understand and express their emotions and who see their responsibilities in sexual matters to be equal to that of girls), a new strategy and delivery framework for sex education needs to be devised. The proposals that follow are noted in theory discussed in the earlier chapters and draw on the evidence-based assessment contained in this study. The proposals constitute a strategy for determining principles and for their effective implementation. The objective is to enhance the education of boys without adversely affecting that of girls.

Principles

Sex and relationships education will not succeed unless it is: -

- a statutory requirement in the curriculum
- esteemed by teachers, parents and pupils

The place of sex education in the curriculum

- *Sex and relationships education should be compulsory for all pupils from school commencement until the statutory leaving age, with further inputs for those who remain in education until eighteen. It should be taught as part of a continuous and progressive programme building on work covered in primary school and concentrated during the early years of secondary schooling i.e. years seven to nine with additional coverage in subsequent years. The model used should be Brunarian i.e. the belief that anything may be taught at any age if addressed in a way which is based on the understanding level of the child, and then revisited and expanded upon. Therefore teaching about sexual relationships and areas such as contraception, STIs and responsibilities should begin in primary school or even at the Foundation Stage and be revisited and expanded upon continually.*

This would ensure that all students have equal access to the whole sex education curriculum and that programmes provided would provide continuing and progressive

education throughout the whole of schooling. It would prevent the 'too little too late' scenario so deplored by the boys and ensure that information was not being given too late to children already engaged in intimate relationships. This would require government action and legislation.

- *Sex and relationships education within PSHE and PSHE itself should be statutory with National Curriculum Programmes of Study as for other subjects.*

This would ensure that governing bodies, heads, teachers, parents and students would take this part of education more seriously. It would ensure a nationally agreed programme which would have to be covered by all schools whatever their denominational leanings. Students would be entitled to a balanced viewpoint giving all perspectives. This is highly contentious here but does not seem to cause problems in the other countries studied. Schools could still explain to students the particular beliefs of their faith but should be obliged to present the variety of opinions and attitudes so as to give students the possibility of making an informed choice. This would prevent the one-sided views which so affect the delivery of sex education in faith schools, as in School F in this study.

- *There should be no right of parental withdrawal from any part of the programme.*

It is essential that good sex education, which is so vital to the development of relationships in later life, is available to all as a right. This country's attitude to this area is bizarre we need to follow the examples of the Dutch. In so many ways this is a promiscuous society acknowledged by writers such as Epstein and Johnson (1998) and respondents such as the Teenage Health Project and School A's co-ordinator, yet children are prevented from being given facts and a chance to learn and ask questions in the mistaken assumption that this will protect them from harm. All studies show that ignorance in this case is not bliss. Government legislation would be required.

- *OFSTED should inspect PSHE with the same rigour as is applied to core subjects.*

This to some extent is allied to the call for PSHE (including sex education) to become statutory with programmes of study which must be covered by all schools from primary and even Foundation Stage. It would also mean that OFSTED would have to train all inspectors more fully in this aspect of the curriculum and also to provide more specialist inspectors.

- *Resource allocation should be at least similar to that for other subjects in the curriculum and preferably higher as there are specific needs for this area of education such as the use of outside expertise.*

Without adequate resourcing to cover materials, outside agencies' costs and the continued updating of teachers working in the area, any attempts to improve the curriculum would fail.

The Curriculum

Guidelines for a possible curriculum that will fulfil the needs of boys without neglecting girls.

The present situation is totally unsatisfactory with students at the mercy of individual teachers, school management teams, religious restrictions and governing bodies. The Curriculum Guidance (DfEE, 2000) though an improvement on previous documents is still vague, lacking in specificity with the only statutory area the biology in National Curriculum Science. This erratic and unequal situation cannot continue. The aims of the programme need therefore to be clearly and unambiguously expressed with detailed information on the knowledge and skills that should be learned by students by the end of the programme. Evidence from co-ordinators, focus groups, questionnaires, Teenage Health Project, Agony uncle, Peer teaching, Students tutors, Epstein and Johnson (1998) Bandura's (1994) ideas on self-efficacy.

The curriculum shall be one that: -

- *concentrates on empowering young people to make decisions from the base of knowledge of the facts and the consequences of their own and other's actions.*
- *puts the emphasis on relationships not just sex.*
- *encourages and teaches young people to take responsibility for their own actions, such as in the relationships between alcohol and sex and the needs of children for stable families. Ensures that concern for others' feelings and beliefs is the base on which the curriculum is delivered.*
- *ensures both male and female opinions and needs are taken into account.*
- *discusses the roles of males and females in relationships and the concepts and stereotypes relating to masculinity and femininity including differing cultural attitudes and the influence of the media.*
- *allows young people time to discuss information and practice responses to pressure and learn how to cope with strong emotions.*
- *openly discusses all forms of sexuality.*
- *specifically tackles the issue of giving and receiving sexual pleasure and relationships with partners.*

- *addresses problems before they are likely to occur and covers contraception in both primary and secondary schools before young people embark on sexual relationships. Allows time to see and discuss forms of contraception, to practice using condoms, know from where contraceptives may be obtained and the responsibilities for use.*
- *discusses the right of individuals to choose whether to have a sexual relationship and the place of celibacy and the right to refuse sex (abstinence education).*
- *addresses the influence of peer pressure on behaviour and provides strategies for resisting that pressure by specifically teaching how to negotiate in relationships.*
- *addresses the influence of the media on sexual behaviour.*
- *includes detailed information on sex-related problems such as STIs and where help may be obtained.*
- *examines the problems that can occur in relationships, their causes and effects.*
- *gives young people the skills required to access advice and help on sexual and relationships matters.*
- *includes areas so far neglected in most school curricular namely, masturbation, male sexual health, penis size and attitudes to pornography.*
- *covers parenting and its responsibilities from the perspectives of males and females.*

Methods of teaching and learning

Evidence for this is taken from focus groups, questionnaires, co-ordinators, Teenage Health Project, Sex Education Workers, The Netherlands, Theatre group, Peer education, Hannan (1996) Blackmore (1996) Salisbury and Jackson (1996) Biddle and Forrest (1997), Blake (1997), BMA (1997), Wood (1998), Moir and Moir (1998) Johnson at al. (2000) Nobel and Bradford (2000), DfEE (2000).

- *Should be active and deliberately chosen to match the specific needs of boys in a way which will also enhance the learning of girls.*
- *Should be enjoyable, using a variety of active methods to stimulate interest and avoid over use of worksheets and written exercises. Use videos and theatre presentations which boys respond to well.*
- *Must employ techniques which suit the learning styles of boys and prevent them from shouting out answers and competing for teacher attention i.e. using pairs work, single or mixed sex, and structured groups.*
- *Avoid a personal exposure approach by setting clear classroom guidelines from the suggestions of the young people and ensuring these are adhered to and using case studies.*

- *Include and accept that information on and open discussion of pornography is essential, preferably with single sex groups to prevent girls attacking boys verbally and so preventing discussion.*
- *Not label boys as the aggressors in sexual relationships and girls as victims and challenge stereotyping.*
- *Start where boys are what interests them and supports them in expressing emotions in an acceptable way.*
- *Specifically address areas which concern boys such as fatherhood, pornography, male sexual health, forms of masculinity, penis size and make boys feel an equal part of the sexual equation with equal responsibilities.*

Aims and learning outcomes

The aims of the programme need to be clearly expressed and should include the following as a minimum.

Evidence taken from focus groups, questionnaires, co-ordinator School H; sex education workers; Forrest (1998) Blake in Godson, (2001).

The programme shall: -

- *Ensure that all students receive equal input on this area of education.*
- *Enable the specific needs of the participants and their preferred learning styles to be taken into account.*
- *Cover all aspects of sexual relationships from both male and female perspectives.*

Learning Outcomes – by the end of their schooling students will have been: -

- *Given detailed knowledge about sexual relationships and have been exposed to balanced and informed viewpoints on sexuality in all its forms.*
- *Informed of the possible consequences of early sexual experimentation, particularly where lack of thought and planning were evident, and of the effects of alcohol on sexual behaviour.*
- *Empowered to make their own informed decisions, encouraged to develop responsible attitudes to relationships, helped to clarify their beliefs, developed self-esteem and have been introduced to ideas which can help to improve their relationships and social behaviour.*
- *Helped to understand the needs and feelings of the opposite sex as regards relationships both heterosexual and homosexual.*
- *Introduced to a wide range of perspectives on attitudes and beliefs about sexual relationships. This should include male and female viewpoints and those from*

different religious and cultural groups and the media.

- *Enabled to acquire information on celibacy as a considered choice and the reasons why that choice of lifestyle may be made.*
- *Helped to acquire information about the problems associated with sexually transmitted infection and too early parenthood and have been given access to preventative strategies and support which is available.*
- *Encouraged to challenge sexual stereotyping, sexual bullying and have acquired responsible social behaviour patterns.*
- *Enabled to cope with, express and discuss their emotions, feelings and fears about relationships.*
- *Enabled to discuss the adverse results of broken relationships, lack of responsible attitudes and how their own lives are affected by these phenomena.*
- *Helped to acquire a thorough knowledge of contraceptive aids, from where they are available and have had practical experience of their use in simulated situations.*
- *Helped to practise responses to peer pressure in regard to sexual experimentation and acquired strategies to resist that pressure whilst maintaining the respect of their peers.*

Clear government guidelines would be required with more detailed aims for this area of the National Curriculum. This would aid the overall aims of the present National Curriculum in preparing students for life as adults.

Status of PSHE and within it sex education

It is essential, if this area of the curriculum is to be taken seriously, that the subject is put onto a firmer footing with higher status. This can be achieved by increasing lesson time and training teachers properly. Evidence from focus groups, questionnaires, co-ordinators, Teenage Health Project, Student tutors, The Netherlands research, Sex Education Workers, Sex Education Forum (1996a; 1997a), BMA (1997), Avert (2000b), Ingham (1997) Hannan, (1996).

Lesson time

- *The time allocation for PSHE should be equal to that of other foundation subjects in the NC and be at set times, not combined with tutorial or form time.*

If students are to gain maximum value from their personal and social education sufficient time allowance for the subject to be addressed properly is essential. The National Curriculum is already overloaded, but many experts (Griffiths, 2000; Kelly, 1999; Bayliss, 1999) agree that much of what is studied is irrelevant and of little importance compared to

the personal and social development of children. The Qualifications and Curriculum Authority would need to act here with a possible rewrite and an alternative more socially developmental based curriculum philosophy.

Training of teachers

- *All teachers should be trained in PSHE and the active teaching methods required during initial training and inset courses should be provided on a regular basis.*

The lack of teacher training in this area is to be deplored. No other subject in the curriculum is taught by untrained and reluctant teachers in the way that PSHE is now. Good education in this difficult area cannot be left in the hands of those who lack even the basic facts and certainly the tools by which to deliver them. This would mean a serious rethinking of the teacher training and continuing professional development curricular.

- *All teachers should have knowledge of different learning styles particularly in regard to boys' learning styles, particularly the needs of boys for short-term goals and factual inputs and be able to utilise these in their teaching.*

This training is essential so as to maximise the effect of lesson delivery and will also enhance the learning of girls.

- *Some teachers should have PSHE as a specialism and these teachers should be those who specifically work in the area of sex and relationship education.*

This is common in other countries where the need for experts in this area has been addressed. The TTA has already approved the training of citizenship teachers. It must do the same for PSHE thereby raising the status of the subject.

Resources

- *An adequate budget must be set aside in all schools to allow PSHE co-ordinators to provide the variety of inputs necessary for a good programme.*

If sex education is to be improved it is essential that funding be provided to allow teachers to use good and effective resources, whether they be written materials or personnel from outside the school. This area of the curriculum in many schools is the 'Cinderella' of the funding round. If things are to improve the government must provide money specifically for this purpose i.e. ring fence resources.

Quality of learning experiences

Learning experiences need to improve if they are to have any real effect on the lives and relationships of the students in the schools. This is particularly the case for boys whose needs are so neglected by present practice. Evidence from focus groups, co-ordinators,

questionnaire, Teenage Health Project, Agony uncle, Peer teaching research, Davidson (1995), Salisbury and Jackson (1996) Forrest (1998) Nobel and Bradford (2000).

Group size

- *Group sizes should not exceed fifteen in any school for all of PSHE teaching to facilitate group work and provide the safe environment required.*

This would enable sensible discussion, lower intimidation and make teachers more at ease in trying active methods of teaching. It would also allow for division of the sexes as and when appropriate (see below). This would need specific extra government funding which initially would appear expensive but in the long term save on the enormous financial costs of unwanted pregnancies and family breakdown. It would specifically help boys who find large groups difficult to cope with in that they tend to show off to peers and not take the subject seriously.

The teachers

- *No teacher should be made to work in this area s/he does not wish to.*

PSHE and particularly sex and relationships education should have a similar status to Religious Studies in that no teacher should be forced to teach this area. Reluctant and embarrassed teachers cannot provide the education so vital to children's development. The government would need to accept this and allow teachers the right to refuse to work in this area of the curriculum.

- *Use should be made of expert help from other areas such as health, but only where close liaison occurs and incoming specialists have been trained in suitable delivery methods and class control.*

This would aid students of both sexes who find it difficult to talk to teachers. Schools should also be encouraged to employ counsellors, specifically trained in helping young people with relationship problems.

Meeting the needs of boys

- *The main curriculum emphasis would be upon establishing relationships, coping with and expressing emotions and forming attitudes. It should specifically address those areas that are of interest to boys (which are at present often neglected), for example, body parts that give pleasure, pornography, fatherhood, masturbation, male health and homosexuality.*

This would shift the emphasis from biology to establishing and coping with relationships, feelings and attitudes and would prevent the fragmentation of the subject which is at present so damaging to students' experiences. A rewrite of the Guidelines for SRE would be required specifically addressing the needs of boys and these would need to be made statutory.

Lesson delivery

- *The main programme should be delivered within an enhanced PSHE framework not in National Curriculum Science, though basic biological facts could remain in this area and be expanded upon in PSHE.*

This will ensure a concentration on facets other than biology, namely relationships attitudes and beliefs which lie at the heart of good sex education programmes and as above prevent the fragmented delivery common at present.

- *Both boys and girls (in primary school) should receive input on puberty and its effect on both the sexes.*

This would prevent the common current practice of keeping boys ignorant about menstruation and if correctly handled remove a source of embarrassment and possible teasing by boys, in primary schools, of girls who reach menarche. It is essential that all facts be understood by both sexes in order to increase empathy and improve relationships. Some of the teaching here may be appropriate initially in single sex groups but should include joint sessions.

- *The methods of teaching and learning should be active and varied to suit the learning styles of both boys and girls and to involve students in the process.*

Active learning methods are essential if the important messages in sex education are to be understood. Students need the opportunity to practice assertiveness, ask questions, discuss topics and come to their own conclusions about this subject.

- *Boys should be allowed some time alone from girls with a teacher (preferably male but more importantly one empathetic to their needs) to discuss issues they wish to raise and allow them to overcome their reluctance to take the subject seriously.*

A suitable model for delivery in each year of sex and relationships education is that recommended by the Teenage Health Project team.

In each year, in mixed schools, the following pattern should be used as a minimum: -

1 session together ——— 2 sessions apart ——— 3 sessions together.

This would double the present time common in most schools and allow more time to discuss the attitudes, feelings, required skills and issues that young people asked for in the questionnaires and focus groups. For boys in single sex schools greater efforts should be made to incorporate girls into the sessions at some stage. Boys themselves were divided on this, as they were, in some cases, fearful of the personal consequences. However, sex and relationships education cannot be correctly covered where one half of the population is not represented. It will also be true that some of the suggested material and issues can be covered in a cross-curricular manner. However, this requires good and regular auditing to ensure that all students are receiving the inputs required and would need careful collaboration of teaching staff to ensure that pupils see the connections. This is a difficult task and should not be attempted by schools who are unsure of how to cope with this approach to the subject.

- *Starting where the children are and working with an understanding of the peer culture, particularly that of boys, is essential and all staff need to be made aware of the negative affects of this culture and given strategies for use in overcoming it.*

This is essential for the education of boys in all areas of the curriculum and not merely in sex education. The TTA needs to address this in the curriculum for teacher training, both initial and continuing. There needs to be a sharing of good practice and time for teachers to visit other schools to see where effective changes have been made. There is a great deal of interest in the academic problems of boys; this must extend to their problems with expressing emotions and making committed relationships.

The implications for education

If the above policy were to be adopted the consequences for schools and ITT establishments would be enormous. These consequences are set out below: -

- Teachers would have to be trained in the area of SRE and PSHE. This would mean that the TTA would need to produce guidelines for the training of all teachers to include this area and for the secondary sector follow the precedent set by citizenship, where ITT establishments are bidding for places for PGCE courses with Citizenship as a specialism. At present the TTA are attempting to trial a project offering teachers training in sex education and accreditation with the expectation that these teachers will cascade information to colleagues in schools (Warwick et al., 2002). This pilot has been completed, not without problems, and if previous attempts to use this type of cascade method in place of training all teachers are examined, the outlook is not hopeful. Pressure on training time and unrealistic workloads means that the good

intentions of such projects are rarely passed on. There is at present no indication that the specific needs of boys will be considered so the initiative holds little promise. As the new Citizenship area of the curriculum will take up only 5% of time on the timetable in school it is possible that training for teachers in SRE could be combined with it. However, most students coming into Citizenship training are likely to have degrees in history, geography or politics hardly a precursor for teaching SRE. Health Promotion or Health and Education degrees would be suitable, as possibly could science, but students with a variety of backgrounds such as in psychology would be acceptable. More important than subject knowledge would be the ability to cope with active teaching methods and an enthusiasm for the subject itself. This would have to be in conjunction with a change in the National Curriculum to cut down content so giving more time to this area of education.

- All schools would require a good PSHE/SRE co-ordinator to ensure that the curriculum was delivered, staff supported and given adequate training. This person would need to be a senior member of staff, who had chosen this route to promotion and the role should be considered a suitable preparation for subsequent application for the role of deputy head teacher. This role should not be combined with other responsibility posts to allow the co-ordinator's undivided attention to the task. It is essential that teachers applying for the role of co-ordinator should be given access to Continuing Professional Development in PSHE/SRE which should be the responsibility of teacher education departments, Local Authorities or private providers.
- The reaction from some parents regarding withdrawal rights and areas such as pornography would possibly be negative. However, governments need to avoid bowing to these minority pressure groups and follow the attitudes in countries such as The Netherlands and the Czech Republic and make this a compulsory area of education. Only by doing this will the needs of boys be addressed and the needs of society as regards early pregnancy, broken relationships and split families receive attention from all quarters.
- Financially the initial costs could be high but the long-term results could save successive governments a great deal of money in the areas of health and social welfare. Early pregnancies, broken relationships and a high incidence of STIs are costly for the country. Babies born to young mothers are more likely to be underweight and sickly, to

suffer from the combined effects of lack of father figures, poor housing, health care, education and long term depression of employment possibilities. The spread of STIs is a drain on health budgets and ruins relationships. Teaching boys about the responsibilities of manhood, parenting, how to negotiate and sustain relationships and how to cope with hurt and rejection without resorting to violence would be invaluable both in terms of money saved and lives enhanced.

- To achieve these results class sizes in secondary schools would have to be halved for PSHE lessons. Taking the average secondary school entry as an average of 6 forms per year group, for years 7-11 halving classes would require sixty PSHE lessons per week, approximately, two teachers working full time on PSHE. If these teachers were appointed separately this would mean form teachers would be relieved of PSHE duties. If one full time teacher and a team of others trained in PSHE and another subject were used, there would still be the added costs of one teacher needed to reduce class sizes.
- If the average cost of a secondary school teacher (with on costs) is taken as £30,000 per annum an extra teacher in a school would add this to salary budgets. As there are 3,729 (DfES, 2002) secondary schools in England and Wales and on average each was to employ one extra teacher the increased salary budgets for the government would be £111,870,000 per annum and for two teachers £223,746,000 per annum. This would be increased by the number of teachers required in authorities who use middle schools until the age of fourteen. Added to this would be the increased costs of better training for teachers in both initial continuing development phases. However, this should be viewed in the light of the savings that could occur in health and social services at a later date.

Consequences for government and society of action or inaction

- The yearly cost to the exchequer is high. The Teenage Pregnancy report (SEU, 1999) estimated the probable costs to the nation in providing support services in an attempt to prevent early pregnancies for the year 2002. This was deemed to be around £60 million to include local and innovative programmes to tackle teenage pregnancy in high-risk areas, childcare, housing projects, research and evaluation, OFSTED inspections etc. This includes initiatives such as the 'Sex Bus' (Carvel, 2002) used in the London boroughs of Enfield and Haringey to attract young people in an attempt to reverse the rising numbers of teenage pregnancies. Supplies of condoms are given out and over half the visitors are boys. The expressed aim here is

....to target boys and young men who tend not to use mainstream family planning clinics. They have often been excluded from sex education messages and blamed for irresponsibility.
(Yudkin in Carvel, 2002)

However, this initiative, though worthy is doing nothing to help boys form relationships, discuss sexuality and cope with their emotions in a mature way. Merely handing out condoms is not the answer to boys' needs as they themselves have explained in this research.

- Added to the above expenditure are the costs of health care and welfare payments (90% of teenage mothers receive income support SEU, 1999). According to the SEU (1999) ten per cent more teenage mothers are on benefit five years after giving birth than other single mothers and teenage mothers are more likely than other single mothers to rely on benefit alone. Single parents and single pensioners are more likely than the population as a whole to be living in a low income household; for people in lone parent families the likelihood was nearly twice that of all individuals, 35% living below the median income for the UK (Social Trends 2002). Teenage mothers who keep their children rather than have an abortion are also more likely to be originally from low socio-economic backgrounds (TES, 2002). Hidden costs such as the deprived lifestyles of children born to teenage parents are difficult to assess, but they include poor education and therefore a lack of contribution to the economy of the country, increased risks of poor health to mother and child, higher likelihood of children going into local authority care and of childhood accidents and many others. This depressing figure also fails to account for the fact that males involved in creating these babies have little input into their upbringing and may go on to create more children who in turn have no relationships with their father. SEU (1999) found that in a small fifteen year study only 20% of mothers were in touch with the father of their children and that other studies have found that one year after the birth of a baby to a teen mother only half were in touch with the fathers of their babies. Many children of teenage mothers and also of older women are growing up without their father's input or the chance to see a working relationship between their parents. It is no surprise therefore that the children of teenage mothers are more likely than the average to have early births themselves, thus repeating the pattern of deprivation.

- According to the TES (2002) the costs to the exchequer of teenage pregnancy are ten billion per annum (these figures are unsubstantiated by government statistics but the obvious cost is very high). A 10% reduction in teenage pregnancy would therefore reduce these costs by 1 billion and a 15% reduction would result in a 1 and a half billion cut easily covering the costs of the reduction in class sizes proposed above by increasing teacher numbers and also pay for an improvement in their training.
- Furthermore an increase in skilled participation in the work force would mean an increase in income tax and National Insurance payments. Calculated as 80% of the average yearly salary (around £25,000) this would mean an enormous increase in revenue over a five or ten year period.

The overall costs to the country of the lack of good sex education, particularly for males, are not easy to calculate. Men are often depicted by the media as feckless, lazy and irresponsible, interested only in sex and instant gratification not long-term relationships. This is of course a distorted picture, but if we continually feed young men with this image and in their sex lessons give them the impression that they are on the sidelines and mere observers, we add to this myth. The boys in this study did not want to be irresponsible; they wanted to make good lasting relationships, but realised they were not equipped to do so. They found communication difficult, talking about feelings and sexuality almost impossible and sadly realised their deficiencies but had no way of overcoming them. There is an overwhelming need therefore for a targeted specialist approach to the sex education of young men across the country by trained individuals who are aware of the peer culture of young men and can help them to work against it from within. Help too could come from the media who could easily create a new culture of the caring, sharing, sensitive, communicative male who is admired by his peers. Sex and relationships education alone cannot solve this problem but can contribute positively to the desired change. Without this the future for young men in this country looks bleak and as a result also that of their potential female partners and children.

To achieve this change the government must act in the area of sex education provision in schools making it statutory and paying special attention to the needs of boys, training specialist teachers and ensuring that all teachers have input on the areas of sex and relationships education and the most effective methods of teaching. As indicated above, class sizes must be reduced and PSHE and sex education receive a far higher profile. This

will mean further costs to the exchequer and the results will be long not short term but should finally have marked effect on the social and mental health and welfare of the nation.

Unfortunately, successive governments have in the past tended to look to the short term rather than looking ahead to future generations. If the problems of teenage pregnancy, broken families and spoiled relationships are to be addressed, even in some measure, government must abandon this approach and invest now to improve the future. Failure to do this will lead to an ever-downward spiral of problems and high cost to welfare provision. Immediate action is required if boys' needs are to be addressed. Without the action the future looks bleak, as at present half of the equation appears to be invisible and not catered for in campaigns or government initiatives. Boys need help now to enable them to play a full part in relationships both sexual and non-sexual, to become good parents and to acknowledge and accept their responsibilities. We need to break the 'macho' mould where men are prevented from displaying tender emotion for fear of ridicule by their peers. They suffer both in making and sustaining relationships and from poor health which partially results from an inability to discuss feelings. The right kind of education can help but as yet there is no guarantee that this is being offered to boys. Action will be controversial and difficult, but without it the wishes of the boys in this study for help for future generations will not be fulfilled and English society will suffer, emotionally and financially as a result.

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Appendices

1. Sample of Questionnaires used with schools.
2. Sample of Letter to teachers.
3. Sample of Interview Questions used with PSHE co-ordinators.
4. Sample of Interview Questions used with focus groups.
5. Copies of published papers

Appendix 1 SEX EDUCATION QUESTIONNAIRE

The purpose of this research is to find out what sex education is being offered in schools, what methods of teaching are used and if what is on offer matches the needs of pupils and in particular boys. Thank you for offering to help me with this research.

Please
PLEASE ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS
leave

blank

1. WHAT IS YOUR AGE _____
2. ARE YOU MALE OR FEMALE (**please circle**)
M F
3. In which school lessons was sex education taught
(**tick all that apply**)
Science
PSE (personal and social education sometimes called PSHE
PSHME PSE PD etc)
Tutorial time/Form time
4. Was the **MAIN** person who taught your sex lessons
(**please tick ONE**)
your **form** tutor
a **science** teacher you **knew well**
a **science** teacher you **did not know** well
another teacher whom you **did not know** well
another teacher whom you **did know** well
a **team** of people
someone from **outside** school
5. In what year/years in school do/did you receive sex education
including HIV and AIDS education
(**please circle all that apply**)

YEAR 7 8 9 10 11 12 13
6. Please rate the sex education lessons in your school as
(**Please tick one**)
excellent good quite good okay not very good poor
7. What areas did your sex education in school cover?
(**please tick all that are correct**)
did you receive information on:-
a) Male body parts
b) Female body parts
c) Which parts of the body give sexual pleasure when stimulated

13. Do/did you prefer to be taught sex education by
(**please tick one**)
a teacher of the same sex as yourself
a teacher of the opposite sex
no particular preference
14. Do you prefer sex education lessons to be taught by
(**please tick one**)
someone you know well (e.g. a teacher)
someone who you do not know and who does not know you (e.g. a visitor)
a mixture of the two
15. Did anyone disrupt the lessons by being stupid, silly, laughing etc?
(**Please circle one**)
YES (**go to question 6**) NO (**go to question 7**)
16. IF yes who were the main culprits
(**please circle one**)
Girls Boys Both equally
17. I would prefer a teacher for sex education who -
Please **rank the following in order of importance**
1 Most important ----- 6 least important

- | |
|--|
| a) Is easy and comfortable (not embarrassed) when giving information |
| b) Has a wide knowledge of the subject |
| c) Makes me feel comfortable so that I can ask what questions I wish |
| d) Keeps the class in control and does not allow people to be silly |
| e) Uses many different methods of teaching the material
e.g. discussions, role play videos group work etc. and doesn't just talk all the time |
| f) Listens to what people say |

Q a-f No.1-6

a	
b	
c	
d	
e	
f	

18. Does the age of the sex education teacher matter?
(**please tick one**)
YES NO DON'T KNOW
19. Which is MORE important for good sex education lessons
(**tick one**)
Having a young teacher OR
Having a teacher who is sympathetic and concerned about your needs

21. In your opinion did the sex education you received at school prepare you for life as an adult?
(please circle one)
- | | | |
|-----|----|------------|
| YES | NO | DON'T KNOW |
|-----|----|------------|

-
-
-
-
-

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Appendix 2 Letter to teachers

Date

Dear Form Tutor/PSE Teacher/PSE co-ordinator

Thank you for allowing me to conduct this research with your students.

I am a lecturer at Middlesex University and have particular research interests in gender and education and PSHE. I am attempting to complete research combining these two fields by investigating the methodologies used to deliver sex education, with particular emphasis on the needs of boys. The UK has the highest teenage pregnancy rate in Western Europe and most initiatives are based on the the perceived need to reduce these figures which has led to a belief, held by those in the field, that the needs of boys are being neglected and the wrong message as regards responsibility in relationships transmitted.

I am attempting to discover which of the many approaches to sex education best serves the needs of boys, by asking pupils' opinions of the sex education they have received, questioning teachers involved in the field and observing a variety of methods of delivering sex education both here and on the Continent.

If you have anything you would wish to contribute or questions you would like to ask please contact me on 0181 411 5995 or by Email

g.hilton@mdx.ac.uk

Thank you once again for your help

Gillian L. S. Hilton

Appendix 3 Questions for PSHE co-ordinators

What is your position in the school?

How important is PSE in school - attitudes of senior management governors etc. PSHE head? Timetabled time etc. School dev. plan?

How is sex ed organised

Group sizes.

Relationship to NC Science

Time allowance

What is taught in the lessons?

Do you use separate or mixed sex classes or do you bring girls into classes (boys' schools)?

Which staff are used and what teaching methods are employed?

Are the teachers of sex education trained in this area of the curriculum?

What are your aims for the sex education programme?

How far in your opinion does the programme meet the needs of boys and girls?

From where do you obtain your teaching materials?

When and where is AIDs and HIV education covered?

Do you discuss pornography with students/

Do you discuss all types of sexuality with your students?

How important is relationships education in your programme?

What are parents attitudes to the programme? Do parents withdraw children from sex ed.?

How do you inform them of their right to withdraw their children? What is the rate of teenage pregnancy in your school? (mixed schools)

How do you evaluate your lessons and the programme?

Do you think the programme could be improved and if so how?

What in your opinion is your school's commitment to the sex education programme? IS it rising static or falling?

Appendix 4 Questions for the focus groups

Do you prefer lessons with boys and girls together or the sexes separate/you would you like girls brought into your sex ed. lessons?

What do you want to learn about in sex education?

What is the peer culture like in this school and how does it affect behaviour and responses in sex education classes?

How do you want sex ed. classes to be organised?

Describe your ideal sex ed. teacher.

Should teachers be specially trained to teach sex education/PSHE?

What methods do you want to be taught by – some suggestions given?

When should sex ed. begin?

How should sex education programmes be evaluated